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THE FAMILY PEN.

MEMORIALS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY,

OF THE

TAYLOR FAMILY,

OF ONGAR.

EDITED BY

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THE FAMILY PEN.

DISPLAY.

A TALE.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

CHAPTER I.

"I WISH we were not going this evening," said Elizabeth; "they say Mrs. Fellows is so clever, and so satirical, that I shall be afraid of speaking a word."

"Dear now! I am glad we are going," replied Emily, "we have heard so much of Mrs. Fellows; and I had not thought about being afraid of her."

"I trust of all things they will not ask us to play. I would not play before Mrs. Fellows for all the world," added Elizabeth.

"I had rather not, certainly," said Emily, "and yet I do not think I should mind it so very much."

"How I envy you having so much courage," said Elizabeth; "I am such a silly, timid creature!"

It was true that the dispositions of these young people differed essentially: they belonged, indeed, to quite opposite types of character.

Emily was thoroughly sincere: whatever she did, said, or *looked*, was in earnest: she possessed the grace of SIMPLICITY;—a simplicity which appeared alike in her virtues, and her faults. It was neither from insensibility, nor self-conceit, that she thought of her introduction to this formidable lady with so much composure. Modest people are not the soonest frightened.—"I wonder what they will think of *me?*" is not the inquiry of humility, but of vanity.

Now this inquiry, Elizabeth was making perpetually: to speak, to move, to weep, or to smile, were with her but so many manœuvres, which she was practising for effect, and to attract attention. The prospect, the picture, or the poem, which Emily admired with all her heart, Elizabeth admired with all her eloquence; too intent upon exhibiting her taste or sensibility, to be truly the subject of either.

It was this disposition to *display*, that made her anxious about the expected visit: Emily was going that she might see Mrs. Fellows; Elizabeth, that Mrs. Fellows might see her.

From the conference with her friend, Elizabeth went directly to her dressing-room. She would have given away half her ornaments to know whether Mrs. Fellows wore ornaments. "As she is a literary lady, I dare say

she despises dress," thought Elizabeth, as she looked at her pearl bracelets; and she clasped and unclasped them several times; but at last put them on in a hurry, because there was no time left to deliberate.

Elizabeth and Emily went together to their friend's house. Emily happened to take off her glove in the hall. "You have no bracelets on!" said Elizabeth. This was a comparison she could not bear:—Mrs. Fellows would think her a mere doll. "Wait one moment," said she; but in snatching one of the bracelets from her arm, it broke; and the pearls wandered deliberately to every corner of the hall. "O your beautiful pearls!" said Emily. But just as she and the footman were beginning the search, a rap, long and loud, announced the arrival of other company. It was Mrs. Fellows herself. "Oh, never mind, never mind," cried Elizabeth, shocked at the idea of being caught by a learned lady in the act of collecting beads—"Thomas will look for them." And, drawing on her glove still more eagerly than she had taken it off, she hurried much discomposed to the drawing-room.

The first glance at Mrs. Fellows, when she made her appearance, convinced Elizabeth that this literary lady was no despiser of dress; and she now regretted the misfortune that had befallen her bracelet.

Mrs. Fellows was reputed a universal genius: besides excelling in all the ordinary accomplishments of a well-educated lady, she had studied botany, and chemistry,

and geology. She had written a volume of sonnets, and a novel, and a tragedy; and appeared—at least among the notables of an obscure country town—to be a prodigy of learning and genius.

Nothing could be more ill-founded than Elizabeth's expectation of attracting the attention of this gifted lady. Satisfied with being herself the object of attention, and engrossed by the display of her own accomplishments, she had little leisure or inclination to observe those of others. She was presently engaged in conversation with two or three gentlemen; and the whole evening would have passed without Elizabeth's being able to ascertain whether she had once attracted her notice, if she had not happened to hear her say—after catching her eye for a moment—"about the height of that young lady."

How much anxiety and vexation do they escape, who mix in society with a simple, unambitious temper!

The business which brought Mrs. Fellows from town, was to dispose of an estate in this neighbourhood to a relation.

"I understand we shall have a great acquisition in this new family," observed a lady.

"Very much so, I assure you," replied Mrs. Fellows; "my cousin is a very sensible, clever, worthy man; and educates his family in a very superior manner."

"Any of the young gentlemen grown up?" inquired a matron.

"Oh no; the eldest, I think, is but ten years old."

"Only ten years old!" said three young ladies in a breath.

"There is a tutor, and a governess, I suppose," resumed the lady.

"No tutor; my cousin at present superintends their education entirely himself: Mrs. Leddenhurst has a governess, I believe; but really I can give you very little information about them," said she: "I have scarcely seen anything of them of late; indeed, my cousin and his wife have some peculiarities, which render them not altogether so entirely congenial as one could wish." And here she changed the conversation; leaving the company in a state of suspense about these "peculiarities:" but it was not insupportable suspense, because the family was expected in six weeks; "and then we shall know all about it," thought Mrs. P——, and Mrs. M——, and the three Miss C——'s, and old Mrs. G——, and young Mrs. G——, and Dr. W——.

At length it was requested that Mrs. Fellows would play. The lively terms in which Elizabeth expressed her pleasure at this proposal were lost amid the general din of solicitation.

"What taste! what feeling! what execution!" she exclaimed repeatedly, during the performance.

When it was over, Mrs. Fellows insisted that some of the company should take her place.

Elizabeth advanced a step or two within the line of observation.

"Miss Palmer, my dear," said the lady of the house, turning towards her: but in the meantime another lady had been prevailed upon.

"What an escape for you!" whispered Emily.

"Yes, indeed," replied Elizabeth faintly; "what an escape!"

When the party broke up, Elizabeth, as she wished her friend Emily good night, added in a whisper—

"How much I am disappointed in Mrs. Fellows!"

Elizabeth and Emily were friends, as it often happens, rather from accident than congeniality. They had been play-fellows from their infancy; and when they ceased to play, they had continued to associate.

Emily was affectionate; and she loved Elizabeth sincerely: Elizabeth felt as much regard for Emily as for any one she knew: but vanity chills the heart; and in proportion as she became conscious of the slightness of her affection, she grew lavish in her professions of it. But notwithstanding the difference in their tastes and dispositions, there were some respects in which they suited each other. Elizabeth could, by no means, have tolerated a friend who had been taller, or fairer, or considered more clever than herself. Perhaps she was not aware how much of her regard for Emily, and the pleasure she felt in her society, depended upon her own acknowledged superiority in these respects.

Elizabeth was now more than nineteen years old; Emily nearly a year younger, and most people thought

"Elizabeth Palmer much handsomer than Emily Grey." They had always lived among people who allowed their full value to external advantages; and Elizabeth's superiority to her friend was a circumstance entirely taken for granted between them; and the deference naturally claimed by the one, was peaceably yielded by the other.

As for Emily, a companion who would talk, and leave her to think and feel as she pleased, suited her better than one disposed to interfere with her thoughts and feelings. Yet she occasionally sighed for something more like her own idea of friendship than she had ever found in associating with Elizabeth.

CHAPTER II.

ONE morning, Elizabeth and several others called upon Emily. There was now an opportunity, they said, of going over the house and grounds at Stokely, as it was open to the workmen, and a great many people had been to see it.

It was a pleasant walk from the town: the house stood on a rising ground, and, embosomed in fine trees, was a picturesque object in all directions.

"What a pity that such a pretty place should be shut up!" had been said year after year by many a traveller. But now everything indicated that inhabitants were expected.

"Let us go over the house first," said several of the party, as they sprang nimbly up the steps to the hall-door.

"Take care of the paint! young ladies," said the workmen, as they flocked into the hall.

While they steered their way among work-tables and scaffolding, and over heaps of shavings and saw-dust, and passed from one apartment to another, they expressed their opinions in various tones and terms of admiration. "What a charming room this is!" and "what a delightful room this will be!"

"What a sweet place for a ball-room!" said one, bounding in upon a fine smooth floor, and humming a few notes of a country dance.

"If I were Mrs. Leddenhurst, I would have this for my dressing-room, or study, or something," said another as they passed on. "This is exactly the sort of room I should like for myself," cried a third. "I wonder what this is to be? I wish there was somebody to tell one what the rooms are to be," said a fourth. "I wonder whether I shall ever live in such a nice house as this?" exclaimed a little girl. "Silly child!" said her sister, who was old enough not to wonder aloud.

They next attempted a door which they could not open. "That room is locked up, and I can't part with the key upon any account," said a person, who seemed to be a superintendent.

"Dear! I wonder what there can be so particularly

curious within," said Elizabeth, looking through the key-hole.

"Nothing particularly curious *within;* they are my books, ladies, which I shall be very happy to show you when they are in better order," said a gentleman who at that instant appeared on the staircase, and passed on: this was said with a graceful bow, and a very good-natured smile. They were all silent in a moment: and stood colouring, and looking silly at each other: for when a party of young ladies are rambling at large over an empty house, it is highly probable that some silly and impertinent things will be said; and each was now trying to recollect what *she* happened to be saying, when the stranger appeared. Elizabeth remembered her own speech very distinctly.

"It must be Mr. Leddenhurst himself, I suppose," said she, in a low voice.

"Oh, you may depend upon that, for you know he said *my* books," replied one of her companions.

"I thought he was to go away with Mrs. Fellows; I had no idea he was here now," continued Elizabeth, in a vexed whisper.

"Don't you wish you had not been looking through the key-hole?" said another of her friends.

"Oh, I don't believe he saw that; I am certain he could not possibly see that," said Elizabeth, sharply.

"Well," said Emily, "I believe we have been all over the house now."—So the party returned quietly home.

The trees of Stokely were bright with the tints of autumn, before it was in complete readiness for its new inhabitants.

One fine evening in October, a travelling carriage, covered with dust, was seen driving through the town; and it was observed to take the road leading to Stokely Park. The travellers were fatigued with their journey: for they had come from a great distance.

"Where are we come to now?" said a little girl, in a sleepy voice, who was roused by their stopping at a turnpike.

"Just coming into Broadisham," said her father: "and now, children, in a few minutes we shall get a sight of Stokely."

"Of Stokely!—and is this Broadisham?" They were all alive in an instant, and looked out eagerly from one side of the way to the other. "Ladies' boot and shoe warehouse—Hodson, Dyer, and Hodson—Eve's Fancy Dress, and Millinery Rooms—Ladies' School—Phœnix Fire-office—Pryke, Haberdasher"—read little Lucy, as they drove through the town.

"What a handsome bridge we are coming to now," said Richard. "And there is Stokely," said Mr. Leddenhurst; "those dark trees, just in the sunset."

The children now expected to stop every moment; but the road had many a tiresome sweep to make still. At length it became shaded by a row of graceful elms; and a fir grove, with park-paling, bespoke their near

approach. And now the gate flew open, and they drove straight up the avenue.

"What a different-looking place it is to what I expected!" said Richard.

"Yes," said Lucy; "but a great deal prettier."

While the father listened to their eager observations, Mrs. Leddenhurst and her friend beside her sat in silence. It was not the extent of the estate, nor the beauty of the scenery—but life, and its vicissitudes, that occupied her thoughts, as she drove up to her new residence.

In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst had been visited by most of their neighbours.

Being people of good sense and discernment, they were not particularly gratified by these specimens of their new society: nevertheless their guests were received with much courtesy and kindness; for their good sense was graced with good breeding, and their discernment was softened by benevolence.

It was generally agreed that Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst were very agreeable people: and no one had detected the peculiarities which had been hinted at. They were well dressed, and well bred; they wondered what Mrs. Fellows could mean. Emily was the first to unravel the mystery.

On the morning that she and her father called, Miss Weston—of whom nobody could determine whether she was "a friend, or the governess"—was inquiring if

there were any one in the town who took in needlework. Emily said there was a young woman who used to work very neatly, but she remembered hearing of her being ill, and did not know whether she could undertake it at present ;—"but I will inquire about it immediately," said she. Miss Weston said she intended to be in the town the next morning; and that if she pleased they would go together.

Emily was glad of this proposal; for there was something in Miss Weston—the expression of her countenance, and the sweetness of her manner—that attracted her attention. There was other company in the room ; and they did not sit near enough to converse together; but she could not help looking at her continually : and their eyes met so often, that at last Emily felt quite ashamed.

Miss Weston called the next day at the time appointed. They had to go a little way out of the town ; and during their walk she engaged in such agreeable conversation, that Emily could not help wishing she might have Miss Weston for a friend.

When they arrived at Eleanor Jones's, her mother opened the door—"Does your daughter take in plain work, Mrs. Jones?" said Emily.

"Yes, Miss—that's to say, she used to do," said the widow Jones ; "but my poor child is so ill, ladies!"

"Mother," said a feeble voice from within, "ask the ladies to please to walk in."

"Yes, let us go in," said Miss Weston.

They found Eleanor Jones sitting by the fire in a tall arm-chair: she looked extremely weak and ill, but her cheeks were flushed at the entrance of strangers;—she spoke with difficulty.

"If it is not much in a hurry, ladies, I think I could undertake a little job," said she, coughing.

"I am afraid it would fatigue you too much," said Miss Weston; "you appear very unwell: has your daughter had advice, Mrs. Jones?"

"The doctor as 'tends the parish, ma'am, he sent her some drops in the spring, but he hasn't been up here o' some time now—only the young gentleman; and he says the cough's of no consequence—but dear me! she coughs sadly o' nights."

"Can she take any nourishing things?" said Miss Weston.

"Oh, she's no liking at all to her meat, ma'am," said the mother: "she takes nothing scarce but fruit, and such like, and now the fruit is just over."

"Do you think you should like some grapes?" said Miss Weston.

"Yes, I should like some grapes very much, I think," said Eleanor Jones; "but my wants are very few now, and I know that all the doctors in the world could do me no good—my time here is very short."

"Oh, you will get better soon, I hope," said Emily; "you must not be so low-spirited."

"I am not low-spirited," she replied; "I am very happy, and if it was not for my poor mother, I should not have a wish or a want."

Emily looked rather puzzled at this; but Miss Weston seemed to understand her. There was a Bible open upon the table; and Miss Weston, laying her hand upon it, said,—

"It is *this*, I hope, that makes you happy; whether we are sick or well, there is no real happiness but what is to be found here."

At this the invalid looked up with great animation, saying, "O ma'am, I am glad to hear you say so, I am rejoiced to think you know that; yes, yes, the Bible made me happy when I was well, and now that I am ill and dying, it makes me still happier."

Emily listened in silence to the conversation which now commenced; and she was surprised and affected at what she heard. She had often read in the newspaper, and heard among her acquaintance, about "bearing a long affliction with Christian fortitude;" and about "resignation to the will of Heaven;" but she now heard sentiments expressed which were entirely new to her. She was surprised that Miss Weston and this poor girl, although entire strangers, and in very different circumstances, seemed so completely to understand each other; and to think and feel so much alike upon the subjects about which they were conversing.

"You have talked long enough now," said Miss

Weston at length, in a kind voice; and she took leave, saying she would call again to see her in a few days.

"Miss Weston, I have a favour to ask you," said Emily, after they had walked a little way in silence.

"What is that?"

"I scarcely know what I mean, exactly," said she; "but I did not understand several things poor Eleanor Jones said just now; indeed, I am afraid my religion must be very different from hers; would you be so good as to explain to me——"

"My dear," said Miss Weston, "you could not have asked anything that would give me half so much pleasure."

Her countenance, as she said this, beamed with benevolence; and there was something so kind and encouraging in the manner of her speaking, that it brought the tears into Emily's eyes.

"If I were not such a stranger to you—" said she.

"We will be strangers no longer," interrupted Miss Weston; "let us be friends, and talk to each other without reserve: and there is no subject of so much importance, none that can afford such an interesting topic for conversation."

"And yet," said Emily, "I have never been in the habit of conversing upon it, nor of thinking about it much; but I am certain your religion must be very different from mine."

"You must not call it my religion," said Miss Weston,

smiling; "there is, there can be, but one true religion, which is that the Bible teaches; and they who most clearly understand, and most consistently practise it, are the wisest and happiest people in the world."

"I read the Bible on Sundays," said Emily, "and I hope I have always done my duty."

"That is saying a great deal," observed Miss Weston.

"But I never knew the Almighty required anything besides?" continued Emily.

"Certainly He requires nothing more than that we should do our duty," replied Miss Weston; "but that is a very comprehensive phrase; are you sure you entirely understand it?"

"Not quite sure," said Emily.

"You have read the Bible," continued Miss Weston, "and so have many people, who yet, from pride, prejudice, or indifference, never appear to have understood its meaning. Let me advise you, now, to read the New Testament with great attention and seriousness; and, my dear, it must be with humility: it is God's word: His own message to mankind: and it becomes us to receive it humbly as His creatures. Did you ever make it a subject of earnest prayer, that God would teach you to understand the Scriptures?—Without this, there is the greatest danger of making some important mistake about them; for it is in this way that He directs us to study His word; and in which alone He promises us instruction. And when you have read

it in this spirit," continued she, "you will be better able to judge, whether there is not something in the Christian Religion beyond the observance of outward forms and duties; whether there be any tendency in these alone, to produce such effects at the near approach of death as you have just witnessed; the same willingness to resign life, the same peaceful serenity at the thought of death, and the same humble joy in the prospect of a heaven of holiness."

Emily listened with interest as her friend proceeded: they parted at the turning of the road, having agreed to renew the conversation in their future visits to Eleanor's cottage. She walked home, musing on what had passed: her mind was affected and elevated; a new world seemed to have opened to her view, notwithstanding her very indistinct ideas as to its nature and reality.

Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst, as well as their friend, were intelligent Christians: they knew religion to be the most important of all concerns, and they uniformly acted as though they believed it. They felt the disadvantage of coming to reside in a neighbourhood, where they had reason to fear its true nature was little understood by those with whom they would be expected to associate; but the hope of being useful reconciled them to the circumstance. There was a general consternation, when it was discovered that the new family at Stokely were, as they called them, "quite Methodists;" all marvelled, many murmured, and some mocked. There were a few

poor and despised people in this town who had generally borne that or similar names: but then, as a lady observed, "It was all very well for that sort of people; but what could induce such a family as the Leddenhursts to make themselves so remarkable, was to her a complete mystery: though, to be sure," said she, "people of property may do anything."

Miss Weston was both a "friend" and the "governess:" —a friendship had subsisted between her and Mrs. Leddenhurst from their early youth, which time had strengthened and matured: but it was only of late that she had become an inmate in her family. Though it was perceptible to none but accurate observers of feelings and faces, Miss Weston was a sufferer:—it is easy to wear a pensive smile, but hers was a smile of cheerfulness; and she was generally spoken of as being "remarkably cheerful."

As to the cause of her sorrow, only a conjecture can be formed; because Mrs. Leddenhurst, who was the only person in whom she had confided, never betrayed her confidence. Among the numerous sources of human woe, the reader may fix upon that which to her may appear most difficult to endure with fortitude and resignation. One may conclude she had lost her friend; another, her heart; and a third, her fortune; but perhaps, after all, it was something very different from any of these.

Miss Weston's idea of resignation was not as one may

see it in the print shops—a tall figure, weeping over an urn in the middle of a wood ; it was, in her opinion, an active, cheerful, and social principle. It was not, indeed, without an effort, that she resisted her inclination to seek relief in rumination and seclusion ; but strength of mind, that is, strength of principle, prevailed. Without waiting to confer with her inclinations, she wrote to her friend Mrs. Leddenhurst, offering to assist her in the education of her little girls.

"You know," said she, "how much I love children, and that of all children none are so dear to me as yours. I am quite in earnest, in saying that I will come and be the governess for whom you are inquiring : do not raise needless scruples ; some employment, that will engage both my time and attention, is essential to me just now ; and I think I should engage in the work of education with an interest that would enable my mind to recover its self-possession. Indeed I am impatient to forsake this retirement—sweet and soothing as it is. Let me come, dear Caroline, and exchange these dangerous indulgences for the more wholesome pleasures of social intercourse and useful occupation."

Mrs. Leddenhurst, who understood enough of the human heart, and of the character and feelings of her friend, to know that her resolution was as wise as it was courageous, gladly welcomed her to the bosom of her family ; where she soon learned to "smile at grief," without sitting "on a monument."

CHAPTER III.

Of all the young people who had been introduced to the Leddenhursts, there was not one whose appearance pleased them so much as Emily's. They observed that in some important respects her education had been defective; but she seemed amiable, modest, and unaffected; and possessed also of good sense, and a strong desire of improvement, which greatly encouraged them in their wishes to serve her.

They perceived that Elizabeth was a less hopeful subject than her companion: but this did not make them less willing to attempt her improvement; for they were not accustomed to shrink from a duty because it was unpleasant, nor to despair of one that was difficult. They were both invited to join the family circle at Stokely as often as they felt disposed. They were not backward to accept this invitation; and an early evening was fixed upon to pay their first friendly visit.

Elizabeth and Emily set off on this occasion with high expectations of gratification and enjoyment. Hitherto they had only seen them with other company; "but now," thought Emily, "we shall be alone, and be able to enjoy their conversation:"—"now," thought Elizabeth, "we shall be alone, and they must take notice of me."

On their way, they met one of the servants from Stokely, with a basket of grapes.

"There goes a present for somebody: who can it be for, I wonder?" said Elizabeth: "the Tomkins's—or the Davisons, perhaps."

"No, no," said Emily; "I can easily guess who it is for—poor Eleanor Jones, who is so ill: I know they send her fruit or jellies every day."

"Well, very likely," replied Elizabeth; "for I heard—but really I can scarcely believe it, Mr. Leddenhurst looks such a pleasant, different kind of man—they say, however, that he and Mrs. Leddenhurst were there the other day, and had such a strange conversation! Oh, I cannot remember half the extraordinary things, I heard they said to her."

"I know they have been to see her," said Emily, "and that she was very much pleased with their conversation; I do not think she thought it strange."

"Well, I sincerely hope we shall have no such gloomy, stupid doings to-night!" exclaimed Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth," said Emily, "I have heard and thought more about religion since I conversed with Miss Weston than I ever did before; and I really think nothing is so likely to prevent one from being gloomy and stupid; besides, do not the Leddenhursts appear remarkably pleasant and cheerful?"

"Yes, in company; you know people must be agreeable in company; but I have heard those over-religious

kind of folks are miserably dull when they are alone."

"Well, we shall see," said Emily.

When they reached Stokely, and entered the room, they found Miss Weston playing a lively tune, to which the children were dancing by the light of the fire. They were cordially welcomed; and Emily felt very happy as the circle formed, and she took her seat by the side of Miss Weston. She looked around, and saw none but cheerful faces; it did not appear to be that kind of cheerfulness which is made at a moment's warning by the rap at the door; they looked as though they had been cheerful and happy all day long.

Elizabeth appeared this evening dressed with taste, though perhaps rather over-dressed for the occasion: and this did not pass unobserved; for in the simple action of walking from the door to the chair there was a manner that asked for observation—that is, it was not a simple action.

Mr. Leddenhurst was looking over a review, "Poetry! poetry in abundance for you, ladies," said he, "if you like it."

"Oh, indeed, I am passionately fond of poetry," said Elizabeth.

"Passionately fond, are you? Here is an article then, that, perhaps, you will do us the favour to read."

Elizabeth readily complied, for she was fond of reading aloud.

"We select the following passage," said the injudicious critic, "for the sake of three lines, which we are persuaded no reader of sensibility will peruse without tears."

"No reader of sensibility!" thought Elizabeth: but how should she discover for certain which they were in that long quotation? To cry at the wrong place, she justly calculated, would be a worse mistake than not crying at the right; but fortunately, as she approached the conclusion, the lines in question caught her eye, considerately printed in italics. She read them with great pathos; and as she read, tears—two undeniable tears—rolled deliberately down her cheeks. Having succeeded in this nice hydraulic experiment, she looked at Emily, and observed with some satisfaction that on her cheeks there was no trace of tears; but glancing round at the rest of the company, she felt rather disconcerted to see how perfectly composed everybody was looking.—"Are they not extremely affecting?" said she, appealing to Mrs. Leddenhurst.

"Really, I can scarcely tell," said Mrs. Leddenhurst; "I always find, that nothing more effectually drives away my tears than having them bespoke: pathetic touches, to produce their effect, should take the reader by surprise, I think."

"I question if those lines could have surprised me into tears," said Mr. Leddenhurst.

"Oh not you, papa!" said Richard, laughing; "men should never cry, should they, if they can help it?"

"Neither men nor women should cry, if they can help it," answered his father.

"I can remember seeing papa cry, though," whispered little Lucy, "when he was telling mamma how glad the shabby-looking gentleman looked at the sight of the guinea; I saw a tear in the corner of his eye, just for a moment."

Elizabeth was so much absorbed by the little vexation she had just experienced, and by endeavouring to ascertain the precise construction that had been put upon her sensibility, that the conversation had taken a different turn before she was aware, and she found Mr. Leddenhurst in the middle of a long story. He had travelled; and was giving an account of a night he once spent in a Laplander's hut; which the children thought so very entertaining, that they often begged their father to tell it them over again; and they now came from the further end of the room, where they were quietly at play, saying,—

"Oh, papa is telling about the little Laplanders!"

Elizabeth suddenly roused herself to the appearance of lively attention. They who feel interest have no need to feign it: but it rarely happened that Elizabeth was really interested by conversation to which she was only a listener. The vain and selfish deprive themselves of most genuine pleasures. There was nothing now, for her, but to wait till the recital was finished: to wait for her turn, with that sort of impatience which good

breeding itself can sometimes scarcely conceal, in those whose sole object in society is to make an impression. But Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst had seen the little artifices of vanity practised by greater proficients than Elizabeth. She was not the first person in whom they had observed a greedy impatience to squeeze into conversation every scrap of information that can be collected upon the point in hand. Little do they imagine, who angle for admiration by this and similar methods, how completely their end is defeated, at least with respect to acute observers. They who are intent upon being heard and seen, are not often observers; nor can they believe how easily they are detected by those who know how to hear and see. The involuntary admiration which is inspired by wit or beauty, and especially the respect for talents and acquirements, are, to say the least, neutralized, if but a suspicion be excited that they are used as articles of *display*.

Elizabeth would have been really agreeable, if she could but have forgotten to be charming. Her form was delicate; her face handsome,—and it might have been interesting, if the constant effort to make it so had not given a restlessness to her features which was far from pleasing: her eye first shot its spark, and then looked about for the damage. In her sensibility, especially, there was an appearance of artificialness, which rendered it difficult to feel real sympathy with her.

"There is nothing I have ever wished for so much as to travel," said Elizabeth, when Mr. Leddenhurst had

finished his narration; "it must be so excessively interesting, I should think, especially with an intelligent companion."

"We who are obliged to stay at home," said Mrs. Leddenhurst, "may, however, enjoy, by our fire-sides, most of the information, and a considerable share of the entertainment, of going abroad, we are now so abundantly supplied with the observations of travellers."

"Yes," replied Elizabeth; "and there is no kind of reading I am so partial to as voyages and travels, they are so uncommonly interesting."

"Very interesting indeed," said Mrs. Leddenhurst: "though I cannot say there is *no* kind of reading that I am so partial to."

"Oh, certainly not; I did not mean to say *no* kind of reading, but—but really I am surprised," continued she, "that Mr. Leddenhurst was never prevailed upon to publish his tour; it would, I am sure, have been such an acquisition!"

At this Mrs. Leddenhurst only smiled, and began talking to Emily, who had fallen into a reverie in *her* turn; but it was not about herself nor the company; her imagination had been carried by Mr. Leddenhurst's narrative to polar regions; and was wandering over fields of ice, and arctic snows, where

> "—— the shapeless bear,
> With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn;"

when Mrs. Leddenhurst recalled her recollection.

The evening passed rapidly away; and to Emily it was passed very happily; but Elizabeth felt an uneasiness which she would have been at a loss to define; there was nothing to complain of, but she was not gratified. She had been brilliant, and arch, and playful; she had caressed Lucy, and admired Caroline, but without effect; and there was a certain expression in Mr. Leddenhurst's eye, when she happened to meet it, that did not quite please her. The vexation she really felt suggested a new experiment. Her animation gave place rather suddenly to an air of pensiveness: she was silent and thoughtful; and started when spoken to, as though waked from an interesting reverie. Notwithstanding this, conversation went on very briskly, and even became increasingly lively; as she appeared disinclined to converse, she was suffered to be silent. At length, Mr. Leddenhurst observed it, and said, "My dear, cannot we think of anything that will entertain Miss Palmer?"

"Here is a new botanical work, with coloured plates: perhaps you will like to look at it," said Mrs. Leddenhurst; and the book and the candles were placed before poor Elizabeth, mortified beyond measure to be treated like a child, dull for want of amusement. Her assumed pensiveness now degenerated into real ill humour, which was but ill disguised during the remainder of the evening.

The fresh air sometimes produces a surprising effect in restoring people to their senses: and Elizabeth, when she had taken leave, and walked a few minutes in the

wind, began to repent of her behaviour. However, they had bade her good night, and repeated their invitation so kindly, that she hoped it had not been particularly observed; and when Emily, who had been too much occupied to remark her friend's disappointment, observed what a pleasant evening they had passed, Elizabeth assented, saying, "A delightful evening, indeed!"

Happy are they who do not go into company to perform; who can think an evening pleasantly spent, that has been unproductive of compliment, and afforded no particular opportunity of displaying the favourite quality, or talent, or acquirement.

There are some unfortunate persons, who seem to make little other use of conversation than as a means of petty, personal aggrandizement; and who, in consequence of this wretched propensity, little as they suspect it, subject themselves to the contempt or pity of those whose opinions are most valuable.

There is a class of speechmakers, who contrive by ingenious allusions, and hints casually dropped, to let you know what they feared you might not otherwise find out: they are letting off fireworks; and when it seems all over, and there are only a few pitiful sparks dropping about—off goes another!—but it never succeeds. For whether it be—"my uncle's carriage,"—or, "my friend the colonel," or "the general,"—or "when I was on the Continent," or, "only a *jeu d'esprit* of mine, a very foolish thing,"—or, "Latin? Oh,

scarcely a word, I assure you,"—or, "a cousin of mine knows him intimately,"—or, "when I write to Lady so-and-so,"—or all these one after another—such hints afford a kind of information which is not intended to be conveyed: they prove, not only that her uncle keeps his carriage—that she knows a colonel and a general—that she has been on the continent—that she writes poetry (and foolish things)—that she learns Latin—that her cousin knows a learned man—that she corresponds with Lady so-and-so; but they show that she is anxious you should know it; that she considers such things as distinctions; and that they are to her new or rare, for people seldom boast of that which they have always been accustomed to; and what is worst of all, it must create a suspicion that she has nothing more left to boast of: for she who gives out that she reads Latin, is not likely to conceal her knowledge of Hebrew or Greek; and she who intimates that she writes to Lady A——, would assuredly let you know it, if she had any connexion with Ladies B——, C——, or D——.

But the symptoms of vanity are almost infinitely various: there is no genus comprehending a greater variety of species. The silly girl, vain of her dress and complexion, is really one of the least offensive and most pardonable of all; for in proportion to the value of the thing boasted of, is the meanness of the boast: hence a pedant is more contemptible than a coxcomb.

But whatever particular character it assume, that mind is in miserable bondage, whose happiness is dependent on the opinion, especially on the applause of others. It is a bondage which seems always the concomitant of a general moral imbecility, whether that imbecility be cause or effect.

CHAPTER IV.

EMILY'S introduction to her new friends at this period of her life, was a more important circumstance than she was aware of, highly as she felt disposed to value their friendship. Notwithstanding her many good qualities, she was not free from faults: she was sensible, modest, and ingenious, but she was—eighteen.

She lost her mother early; and her father, although desirous to do every thing in his power for the welfare of his only child, was not aware of the best means to promote it. He was a man of business, and it did not occur to him that anything more was requisite, than to send her for several years to an established school, from whence he expected her to return completely educated. He did not consider that it is often not until the time when young persons leave school, that the real ardour for self-improvement is excited, which it is of so great importance to direct and cultivate.

Girls of entirely common minds take leave of their

books, and often of the accomplishments which they have acquired at such a vast expense of money and time, at the conclusion of the last half-year: delighted to exchange them for the pleasures from which they had been reluctantly restrained during the tedious periods from Christmas to Midsummer, and from Midsummer to Christmas. Revelling for a few giddy years in vanity and idleness, they by and by settle in life; and as the vigour and interest of youthfulness subside, sink into those ordinary beings who, with thousands of their kind, eat, drink, and sleep, dress, visit, and die; while young people in whom the spark of intelligence has been enkindled, are exposed to different dangers. Pride, pedantry, romance and many other evils, according to the accidents of disposition and education, are the frequent consequences of partial and uncorrected cultivation.

Emily's *simplicity* was her grand preservative from many of these perils; and she possessed a native delicacy of taste which defended her from others. With the choice of all the volumes in the circulating library of a country town, her reading had been tolerably select. When she left school, her father informed her that "he did not approve of young girls reading novels:" but he had little hope that the prohibition would be regarded, because he firmly believed that "young girls *would* read novels." But in this instance, Emily had less temptation to disobedience than many: from whatever

was common, low, or profane, she always shrank with dislike. Good taste had in some measure supplied the place of good principle; and of all the gifts of nature, that instinctive fineness of feeling is most estimable, of which education itself can but produce an imitation.

Emily read and felt poetry, and lived in its atmosphere: but as none of the beings around her did the same, she shut herself up in her own world of enjoyment; neither desiring to interfere with the pursuits and pleasures of other people, nor wishing them to participate in hers. She loved her father tenderly, and was obedient and attentive to him: but he was so wholly incapable of entering into her feelings concerning those things which she thought most interesting, that she never attempted to address him in a language which she knew would have been quite unintelligible: while he, satisfied with her cheerful looks and dutiful conduct, dreamed not of the ideal world his daughter inhabited. He studied to make her happy by supplying her with all the comforts and pleasures his circumstances would allow: but it was not for these things that Emily felt most obliged to her father. Having never known the want of a constant supply of those daily comforts, which are as really necessary to the intellectual as to the unrefined, she had not learned to value them. It was the liberty she enjoyed to pursue her own pleasures—the luxury of being alone—the inestimable privilege of not being obliged to talk, that inspired her with gratitude,

and made her think him the best and kindest of fathers. And, indeed, this gratitude was not misplaced: for that sort of kindness, which allows the object of it, as far as possible, to pursue its own plan of happiness, is that alone which makes the difference between gratitude and thanks. It is but a selfish kind of generosity to load persons with favours they do not value, and thwart them in the very point on which their pleasure depends.

There was one standing trial of Emily's good-nature; this was, that her father expected her to read the newspaper to him every day after dinner. The sight of the newspaper was disagreeable to her; and politics were worse than uninteresting: however, she thought of Milton's daughters, and made the daily sacrifice with a good grace, and by degrees attained so great a proficiency in the art of reading and carrying on her own train of thought at the same time, that it became less burthensome. The kind "thank ye, dear," with which her father always repaid her when she finished her task always reproached her more than anything, if she had performed it with reluctance.

The company of "uninteresting people," as Emily secretly styled the whole circle of her acquaintance, would have been grievously burthensome but for this habit of abstraction, which enabled her to take some apparent share in conversation, and to enjoy her own delicious musings at the same time. It could not, however, escape the observation of her friends, that her

own contemplations seemed more agreeable to her than their company; and she had sometimes been called proud: but it was not by those who knew her, those who had opportunities of witnessing her invariable sweetness and good-nature, and the obliging alacrity with which, when once roused from a reverie, she would do anything for anybody; though it sometimes happened that her services were required before her attention was excited.

Notwithstanding this indifference towards most of those she had hitherto known, Emily had very sublime notions about friendship; and from her first conversation with Miss Weston, she believed she had found that concerning which, as yet, she had only speculated. Her heart soon glowed and expanded with affection and respect towards the whole family at Stokely. Although the acquaintance was so recent, she felt more at home there than in the circle of her old associates; for she was with beings who understood her—to whom she could express her feelings without the dread of being stared at for eccentricity. Not that her new friends by any means coincided in all Emily's feelings and opinions: but they were not misinterpreted, nor ridiculed; and when corrected, it was with a tenderness and reasonableness that made her quite sure she had been in the wrong.

But it was not likely that a girl of Emily's age and disposition should love such friends as the Leddenhursts —especially as they were new friends—with entire

sobriety and moderation. In comparison with them, every body appeared uninteresting and insignificant: and everything belonging to Stokely appeared to her to possess some peculiar excellence, incommunicable to any other place or thing. The children seemed more lively and engaging than all other children; the flowers more fragrant; the trees more picturesque.

When she walked out with her father, she always pleaded to go that road, or at least some walk where the house was in view: and it was a sort of pleasure if they happened to meet even a greyhound belonging to Stokely. For on such an occasion—perhaps after she had been wondering that her father should seem so much interested in what he was talking about—she would exclaim with sudden animation, "There's Leopard!—pretty fellow!—see, papa, is not he a graceful creature?"—and be disappointed that her father appeared so little interested by the interview. But when once affection, however well placed, exceeds the bounds of reason, it becomes a source of at least as much torment as delight. They who live on imaginary pleasures, must expect a balance of real pain. Emily did not expect, and she thought she did not even wish, for an equal return of affection from these friends; but she was too anxious about it: and although they gave the most substantial proofs of their regard for her, she tormented herself when any little expression of it was accidentally withheld. It is not until persons enter

upon the realities of life, that they learn to distinguish between what is essential and what is trifling in friendship, as well as other things; and Emily had this and many other lessons to learn, which are never effectually taught but by experience. She possessed, however, a certain nobleness of temper, which prevented her from feeling jealous of Elizabeth. If ever she detected in herself a tendency to that meanness, she instantly discarded it, and thought, "Is she not my friend?"

As Emily became better acquainted with them, she saw and heard many things at Stokely that surprised, and even disappointed her. Mr. Leddenhurst, for instance, appeared really interested about politics, or rather public affairs: and Mrs. Leddenhurst engaged in her domestic concerns, not so much as matters of dry duty as Emily had generally considered them.

She observed, too, that they entered into conversation with their guests, with a degree of interest that exceeded, she thought, the requirements of politeness; instead of practising that dexterous conciseness of reply which brings a tiresome subject to the quickest possible termination.

But what surprised her most of all, and occasioned her the most pain, was a confession one day, from Miss Weston, that she was by no means devoted to poetry. She felt no higher delight in it than every cultivated mind must derive from the productions of the best poets: and she assured Emily, that she had more satis-

faction in reading works addressed to the understanding, than in the finest productions of imagination.

Observing that her young friend looked disappointed, she added: "But, Emily, you must not suppose that I despise or undervalue the taste in others, because I do not possess it myself. I not only tolerate, but I admire it, where it is correct, and does not stand in the place of better things."

"But yet," said Emily, "I wish you felt exactly as I do about it."

Now Emily possessed more genuine poetical taste than many who talk a great deal about poetry. It was not the fashionable admiration of the poem or poet of the day; nor the pedantic taste of the classic or the critic; nor the indiscriminating rapture of youthful enthusiasm; but she had an eye to see, a heart to feel, and taste to select the truly poetical, not only in books —but in nature, in life, in sentiment.

She did not often yield to the temptation of scribbling: when she did, it was to express and gratify some feeling of the moment; not to show about among her acquaintance, or to send to a magazine or a newspaper. She was quite convinced that her own compositions were juvenile at best, and far inferior to the productions of poets that she did not greatly admire. This was one instance in which her good taste proved of essential service to her: it saved her from the unhappy mistake of those who perceive no difference between writing

verses and writing poetry; and who accordingly go on writing verses, as many as you please—or more: which is an art as easy of attainment as that of doing cobble-stitch, or making patchwork, or painting sprigs on a thread-paper.

They were just entering on a disquisition upon poetical taste, when a morning call interrupted the conversation. It was Miss Oliver: one of the standing inhabitants of the town. She belonged to a class of ladies, of whom it may be said, that they are *good for nothing but to be married.* At eighteen she was tolerably pretty; and about as lively as mere youth will make those who have no native spring of vivacity. Her education, like her mind, was common. If she had married she might have performed the ordinary offices of domestic life as well as they are ordinarily performed. Though she might not have cared much for her husband, she would probably have loved her children; and the maternal duties and affections of themselves impart a degree of interest to any character. But she did not marry, although trained to consider marriage as the grand object at which she was to aim.

Year after year passed away; during which her attendance at the Christmas rout, the Easter ball, the Summer races, was tiresomely punctual. At length it became necessary, by extra attention to dress, and studious vivacity, to show that she was still young; but even that time was gone by, and she now only laboured to prove that she was not *old.* Disappointment, and the discon-

tent occasioned by the want of an object in life, had drawn lines in her face which time might still have spared. It sank down into dismal vacuity after every effort at sprightliness; for without mind enough to be pensive, she was habitually dull.

Her circumstances did not allow her the relief of frequenting places of fashionable resort; she contrived to exist with no other air, and no better water, than were to be obtained in her native parish. The few families in the neighbourhood with whom, in her youthful days, she used to spend her Christmas or her Whitsuntide, were dead, or dispersed, or the acquaintance was broken off: so that the routs and card-parties of this little town were the only relief to her monotony; where she went to meet the same faces, and to say and hear the same *nothings* as ever.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the veriest trifle——a new stitch, or a new pattern—became to her an affair of importance; that the gossip of the neighbourhood seemed essential to her existence; and that, without malignity, scandal should become an entertainment, and mischief a recreation.

Having conversed for a short time with Mrs. Leddenhurst, in a strain of commonplace that forbade the supposition of an original thought having ever by any accident strayed into her brain, she took leave. As Mr. Leddenhurst shut the door after her, Emily was greatly surprised to hear him say, "Every human being is interest-

ing." Thinking her and most other human beings uninteresting, she could not understand this at all: but to Mr. Leddenhurst, who was an observer of human nature, and studied it as the most important and interesting of sciences, every specimen was valuable, for every specimen presents some shade of variety. But there was a still higher interest which the meanest of his fellow-creatures did not fail to excite. Christian benevolence was with him an active principle; and the earnest desire of doing good led him to seek and cultivate the society of those, whom the pride of intellect, or the selfish indulgences of taste, would have taught him only to shun.

"What an alteration," said he, "an interest in religion would make in such a countenance as that lady's! What a new world of hope and happiness might be opened to such a character! Caroline, let us cultivate her acquaintance."

CHAPTER V.

ELIZABETH and Emily accepted, with apparently equal eagerness, the offer of their friends at Stokely, to assist them in their course of study and self-improvement. They had free access to Mr. Leddenhurst's ample library, and the advantage of his advice to direct their choice of books. The course of reading recommended

to Emily was calculated to inspire her with a taste for solid acquirements and general information, and to correct, without impairing, the liveliness of her fancy, and the originality of her mind.

They found it more difficult to ascertain what plan of study was most congenial to Elizabeth's taste, or most likely to improve it. The pleasure she took in reading, or in any kind of study, for its own sake, was but small. It was less, perhaps, than she was herself aware of; because she was not accustomed to analyse her motives; and she might possibly mistake the avidity with which she often sat down to read a book in the morning, which she intended to talk about in the evening, for the pure love of knowledge, or the gratification of genuine taste.

How many books Elizabeth would have read, and how many things she would have learned, if she had been Robinson Crusoe, she never inquired.

A very superficial kind of knowledge had been hitherto sufficient to answer all the purposes to which she applied it; but now that she was associating with persons who possessed, and evidently valued, more substantial acquisitions, she began to apply herself to them with avidity: for Elizabeth could accommodate herself to the different manners, tastes, and opinions of different people—which she possessed some sagacity in discovering—in a way truly astonishing to simple beholders.

There was now nothing so dry, so difficult, or so wholly foreign to her real taste, which she would not

have set herself about if it had been recommended at Stokely, or if Emily had been going to apply to it.

What a pity that so much labour should be lost !—lost, not only with respect to the particular end aimed at, but as to any sterling advantage to her own mind ; and her new friends were pained to perceive, that with all her laborious efforts to obtain it, she missed the only method of gaining solid approbation. They did not, indeed, wish to discourage her in the pains she was willing to take ; but above all they would have been pleased to see her becoming simple, honest, unobtrusive, and in earnest.

Elizabeth's studies were interrupted one morning, by revolving a scheme, which was suggested to her by something she heard Mrs. Leddenhurst say the evening before, about establishing a Sunday-school for the poor children of Broadisham ; and as soon as she had breakfasted, she stepped into the disorderly cottage of a neighbouring cobbler, who had seven or eight dirty children that were always either playing or fighting in the street, and, to the great surprise of the whole family, she offered to teach them all to read.

At first they did not seem to understand her ; and when they did, they appeared less struck with her generosity than she had expected. The father went on with his work, with a proud sullen countenance. The mother grinned stupidly, and said, "I don't know as they'll choose to *larn*. Bill, boy !—ooll ye like to *larn*

to read?—Sal, do ye hear—ooll ye choose to *larn* to read, child?"

Bill said "No,"—Sall said "Yes;" while Elizabeth, indignant at their rudeness and ingratitude, would have left them to their ignorance; but recollecting her object, she condescended to expostulate, representing the importance of the acquisition; and "You know," said she, "you cannot get them taught for less than twopence a week anywhere in the town, and I tell you, I will teach them all for nothing."

Finding, however, that she made no impression on the parents, she turned to the children, saying, "Well, if you'll come and let me teach you to read, I will give you all a halfpenny a-piece every Sunday morning."

These words, "a halfpenny a-piece," were the only ones the children seemed to understand.

"I'll come if you like," said one of them: "and so'll I," "and so'll I," said some of the others. So in consequence of her liberal promise, she had four or five dirty scholars the next Sunday morning.

But while the children were thinking of their halfpenny, and Elizabeth of her reputation, A, B, C, was a dull subject to both parties.

"B, I tell you, you stupid little creature!" said she, again and again; but at last her scholars were dismissed, with scarce any notion about A, B, and C, than that there was some connexion between them and a halfpenny.

The very next day, as Elizabeth was walking with Miss Weston and Emily, they met a party of young ladies, who asked Elizabeth what made her "so uncommonly late at church yesterday morning?"

"Why, I was detained rather longer than I intended by my little scholars," said she.

"Scholars!" said Emily.

"What scholars have you?" said Miss Weston.

"Only a few poor children, that I teach to read on Sundays," answered Elizabeth, carelessly.

"Indeed! I'm pleased to hear that: I did not know there was any one here who—indeed I am *very* much pleased to hear it," said Miss Weston; and as she spoke, she looked at Elizabeth with such an expression of approbation as she was not accustomed to receive.

For Miss Weston's was a charity that not only "hoped all things," but "believed all things" in a wider sense than would have been possible, had she possessed a little more intuitive perception of character. Herself perfectly upright and sincere, any species of dissimulation appeared to her almost impossible; and the actual discovery of artifice, at which the malignant would be gratified and the sarcastic amused, filled her only with grief and pity.

That evening Elizabeth was invited to Stokely, to assist in forming a plan for a Sunday-school.

"We have certainly injured poor Elizabeth," said Miss Weston, when she mentioned the circumstance to Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst. "Not that I should think

so much of her having raised a little school of her own when no one else had thought of it, but she has never told us, never boasted of it, even when we were speaking on the subject. Emily herself did not know of it."

"I am surprised at that," said Mrs. Leddenhurst.

As soon as Elizabeth arrived, they began consulting about the school.

"We have no wish, Elizabeth," said Mrs. Leddenhurst, "to interfere with your arrangements; as you were the first to begin, we shall be quite contented to follow you. What plan, my dear, have you pursued with your scholars hitherto?"

"Oh," said Elizabeth, colouring, "I have no very particular plan; I hear them read, you know—and so forth: but I am sure you and Miss Weston understand these things much better than I do."

Mrs. Leddenhurst then described some of the arrangements and methods of teaching which had proved successful in schools she had formerly been engaged in; and as they entirely met Elizabeth's approbation, it was determined to proceed without delay.

A convenient room was provided in the middle of the town, and Elizabeth and Emily, with a few other young people, undertook to attend regularly, twice every Sunday. The poor families around were not all so insensible of the privilege as Elizabeth's cobbler, for a school of fifty children was presently raised, and the numbers increased continually. More teachers were soon wanted,

but though many ladies were applied to, only a few were willing to lend a helping hand, and it was found difficult to provide a sufficient regular supply. Some were too indolent, some appeared very eager at first, but as soon as the novelty was over, they became irregular in their attendance, and dropped off, one by one: for, to submit to the self-denial and exertion requisite to a regular and persevering attendance at a Sunday-school, requires, in general, some stronger motive than mere caprice; although many motives beside the right one may be strong enough.

In this exigence, they gladly accepted the assistance of two or three young women of a lower class, who came forward to offer their services. They appeared quite competent to the undertaking, having been formerly engaged in a small Sunday-school, which fell off for want of the means to support it.

One of these, well known by the name of "Betsy Pryke," was a person of some repute among her friends and acquaintance.

She was a sharp, neat, compact, conceited-looking person, who kept a little haberdasher's shop in the market-place. By the aid of some quickness, a good memory, and what was called a great taste for reading, she had accumulated a curious mass of heterogeneous lore, with which she was accustomed to astonish, if not to edify, her simple neighbours. She was particularly fond of hard names, and words of many syllables; and

her conversation was frequently interspersed with quotations from Young, Hervey, and Mrs. Rowe.

Her customers, in addition to their purchase, were generally favoured with a little learning, gratis, while she was weighing the pins or measuring the tape; and even before those whom she could not venture to entertain with familiar discourse, some fine word, or knowing remark, was dexterously dropped, to let them know what she was; and her behaviour to this class of her customers was marked by that mixture of pertness and servility which is commonly produced by self-conceit in dependent circumstances.

To these qualifications Miss Pryke added a flaming profession of religion. She was one of the very few inhabitants of this town who appeared to pay any serious regard to it; and among those pious, simple people, who possessed little of the wisdom or knowledge of this world, she passed for a pattern of zeal and sanctity. Miss Pryke's creed was all creed: she was fond of holding argumentations upon a few points on which she considered herself to have attained "more light" than the generality of plain Christians. She appeared to take little interest in the practical parts of Christianity, about which there is no controversy; and upon those who made anything more than a distant or casual reference to these subjects she readily bestowed her enlightened pity. They were "persons in the dark;" and if they were ministers, they were "blind leaders of the blind," and knew

nothing of the Gospel. She valued comfort much above consistency, and was more observant of her frames of mind than of her temper.

She could quote Scripture with great facility, but was fonder of hearing it allegorized than explained. She had by rote the whole string of those phrases and particular modes of expression which pass current among some good people, and which, although frequently used with the utmost sincerity, are very far from being evidences of it.

Susannah Davy was a person of a very different description: she was an humble, serious, and superior young woman.

Her father was an ale-house keeper, a profane, violent man; he scoffed at religion, and had treated his daughter with great severity since she became acquainted with its value. But she submitted to his harsh treatment with patience and meekness, and conducted herself in his riotous house with such strict propriety, that she was respected by the lowest who frequented it.

Whenever she could be spared from the business below, she took refuge from the disorderly company in the kitchen, in her quiet chamber; where with her Bible, and a very few good books, she passed many a tranquil and happy hour.

She had a pleasing, intelligent face; and while her manners were perfectly unassuming, there was a dignified reserve in her deportment. Her dress was neat and

plain. She had that nice sense of propriety which secured her from the vulgarity of dressing beyond her station.

She showed that she respected herself by her uniformly respectful behaviour towards her superiors; and the circumstance of the ladies she was now introduced to being her fellow-Christians, did not dispose her to forget what was due to them. She felt no inclination to practise that unbecoming familiarity which, in some instances, has proved a hindrance to profitable Christian intercourse between the brother of high and of low degree.

The fault, however, is not always on one side; there is a manner in which some good and very charitable people behave towards their inferiors in rank which must be grating to those who retain any independence of mind.

It was not thus with the Leddenhursts: they always remembered and respected the rights of the poor: those rights which belong to them in common with the rich, and which, in so many essential respects, place all the ranks of mankind upon an equality. They considered their services as voluntary, their dwellings as sacred, and, above all, their minds as free, as their own.

There were few families more beloved, and more justly, by their poor neighbours, than the Leddenhursts. They were the friends of the poor, without calling themselves, or wishing to be called, such names as

patrons, benefactors, and the like. Their offices of charity were never performed with that too frequent condescension of tone and manner which is but a creditable way of showing pride. They took particular care to instil proper notions on this subject into the minds of their children; that when they were going about to the cottages on little errands of kindness, they might not fancy themselves such condescending little cherubs as some foolish people might call them. They were told that a child cannot condescend to a grown person: and the little Leddenhursts were remarked for their modest, respectful behaviour to servants, and to the poor.

But all this time Susannah Davy is waiting to speak to Mrs. Leddenhurst. Her appearance very much prepossessed them in her favour; and they accepted the offer of her services with still more readiness than that of her sagacious friend. They both, however, seemed well qualified for the employment; and Elizabeth and Emily, to whom such engagements were entirely new, appeared at first, in comparison with them, to some disadvantage as teachers of a Sunday-school.

Indeed, they both experienced some disappointment in this concern. In *itself* it was wholly uninteresting to Elizabeth: for what is there in a row of poor children, to interest a vain, selfish mind? and she found it more unproductive in other respects than she had expected. Although she would lose a great deal by

withdrawing her attendance, there was but little to be gained by continuing it. She was but one of a number, undistinguished among the other teachers, who were too busy with their own classes to observe Elizabeth's attention to hers.

Emily's disappointment was of a different kind: she had surveyed the form of children allotted to her—which consisted of the usual proportion of the stupid, the brisk, the idle, the diligent, and the froward—with sanguine expectations of what instruction would do for them; not calculating on the dull comprehensions, feeble powers, or perverse dispositions of the little beings she had to deal with. She soon discovered that the pleasant reward of immediate or certain success was not one that could be depended upon; and Miss Weston told her, that the only way not to feel discouraged, was to be contented with the satisfaction of endeavouring to do good to our fellow-creatures. She knew better than Emily what consequences to expect from such exertions; and was contented to perceive that the children were tolerably regular in their attendance; that they made a real, though slow progress in their learning; and that they gradually became more decent and orderly in their appearance and behaviour.

It struck Miss Weston that the new teacher, Miss Pryke, regarded her friends Elizabeth and Emily with an evil eye. Some hints she occasionally dropped confirmed this suspicion: but she had not given her

an opportunity to explain herself fully, having rather avoided entering into conversation with Miss Pryke. Her manner of talking, especially on religious subjects, was not agreeable to Miss Weston. She had much greater pleasure in conversing with Susannah Davy. The poor in this world are often "rich in faith;" and many a lesson of patience, trust, and cheerful suffering may be learned from their "simple annals." When this pious, humble girl told of the peace and happiness she enjoyed during her hours of retirement, even in the midst of hardships and insults, Miss Weston felt that if her own sorrows were more refined, her consolations were not more elevated.

The truth was, that Miss Pryke was not very well pleased to find Elizabeth and Emily in office at the school. She knew that they had always been numbered among the gay young people of the town; and she augured no good from admitting people of the world to engage in such a service. Miss Pryke's notions concerning this phrase, "people of the world," were neither liberal nor correct. It is a phrase which cannot be particularly attached to wealth or station: nor is there any condition of life, any creed, or party, from which it must necessarily be excluded. And it is of little consequence, whether the worldly mind be seeking its gratification from a display of dress and beauty in the glitter of a ball-room, or from a display of its "gifts" among a few poor brethren at a prayer meeting: each

is loving "the praise of men more than the praise of God." But this was not the view of the subject that Miss Pryke was accustomed to take. With the exception of herself, and a few of her friends, she considered all the inhabitants of Broadisham, especially those of the higher class, as, emphatically, "*the world.*"

One day, when Mrs. Leddenhurst and Miss Weston remained after the school was dismissed, to make some arrangements in the room, Miss Pryke seized the opportunity she had been wishing for. Mrs. Leddenhurst remarked that the children were making as much progress as could be expected.

"Yes, certainly, ma'am," said Miss Pryke, "as it respects their temporal instruction; but for my part," added she, sighing, "I could have wished to see the work prospering in our hands in a different way to what it does: it would be a great encouragement to my mind, I must say, to see some of these dear children enlightened."

"We are not to expect miracles," answered Mrs. Leddenhurst; "there are very few of them who can read their Bibles at present."

"Oh," replied Miss Pryke, "we must have faith, and nothing will be impossible; but if I may speak my sentiments, Mrs. Leddenhurst," she said—now resolving to cast off the fear of man—"I do not wonder that our labours are not blessed; and I don't believe they ever will be while we have so many people of the world

amongst us. What can be expected from such poor, dear, deluded, young creatures! and what an example to set before these dear children, Mrs. Leddenhurst!"

Here Susannah Davy ventured to remark that "perhaps their attendance at the school might be useful to the young ladies; she had heard of such instances, and thought it would be a great pity to discourage them."

To this Mrs. Leddenhurst assented; and observed that "so far from disapproving of their assistance, she lamented that no other ladies had joined them; she knew not by what authority they should be justified in forbidding any who were willing to unite in a good work." —And she silenced, without satisfying, Miss Pryke, by adding that "there was nothing in the character or conduct of these ladies that, in her opinion, disqualified them for the task they were at present required to perform."

The conversation ended here; for Miss Pryke was not the kind of person with whom they chose to enter into a further debate. She could not, however, be more truly concerned for the religious welfare of the children than they were. The grand object of all their exertions, and of which they never lost sight, was to train them for heaven; and they steadily pursued those methods, which, in their opinions, were most likely to promote this end. They did not attempt to feed them with "strong meat," but with "milk," because they were "babes;" and communicated the simple ideas they could comprehend in plain language and short sen-

tences, such as they might easily attend to and remember. They knew that most children will not listen to a long discourse, however excellent; but that their attention may be excited by a short, striking, personal address.

Such slow and simple methods did not satisfy Miss Pryke's zeal for the conversion of her pupils. Not considering the usual course of divine proceeding in spiritual, as well as in natural things, she expected to sow and reap at the same time: but instances of Sunday-school children appearing seriously impressed are rare, and, generally speaking, doubtful; though there have been hopeful exceptions. At any rate, teachers may be satisfied with imparting that knowledge, and forming those habits, which are so frequently followed, in after-life, by the divine blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

In the meantime Emily's friends witnessed with great pleasure the hopeful though gradual change that appeared to be taking place in her mind. These friends could make allowances for the prejudices of education and the influence of early habits, while they were pleased to observe in her a delicacy of conscience which made her extremely guarded in conversing on the subject of religion, lest she should be led to ex-

press more than she felt. Without sincerity, she saw that religion is but a name, and without earnestness, a shadow.

As soon as she began reading the Bible with attention and prayer, she perceived that she had never before read it to any purpose. She was surprised that she had often passed over the same passages which now struck her so forcibly, with such total inattention to their obvious meaning. She began to feel that to obtain the "one thing needful" must be the grand business of life, to which all other things must be secondary. The more she thought of God, and of the nature of heavenly happiness, the more she was convinced that "His presence" could not be "fulness of joy" to any but those who are, like Him, holy and spiritual. She had bowed at the name of Jesus, and spoken of Him, and heard Him spoken of, as "our Saviour," and "our blessed Saviour;" but with notions the most vague, and feelings the most indifferent. But when she began to regard Him as a Saviour from sin and misery, as the Friend of *sinners*, a living and present Friend, and to hope that He might be hers—His being and His character appeared an astonishing reality, and it seemed to her as though she had never heard of Him before.

She soon, however, began to experience some of the difficulties which will be encountered by all who are really in earnest. She was sincerely asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" But, like him who

once "went away sorrowful," Emily found herself unwilling to make that entire surrender of the heart to God which he requires, and without which religion is but an irksome bondage, a fruitless effort to compromise between God and the world. She complained of a secret reluctance and disinclination to serious thought and engagements, and of a disproportionate interest in her own pursuits and pleasures. She sometimes expressed a fear to Miss Weston that her solicitude about religion arose more from a dread of the consequences of neglecting it than from a desire towards it for its own sake.

To these complaints her friend listened with sympathy, and administered such encouragements as were calculated, not to make her easy and satisfied with her present attainments, but to stimulate her to perseverance and diligence. She explained to her that these or similar obstacles ever oppose the entrance of real religion to the human heart; that all are naturally indisposed to embrace it; but that those who feel and lament this indisposition have every encouragement to expect assistance.

"Strength," said she, "is promised to those, and those only, who are sensible of weakness; who, acknowledging with deep humility and poverty of spirit their mental impotence, are willing to receive help of God."

"That change of heart which consists in new dispositions and affections, new pursuits and pleasures, new

apprehensions of things unseen, and without which heaven could not be happiness, is," she said, "the immediate operation of the Spirit of God. It is that for which of ourselves we are absolutely insufficient. We must not, however," continued Miss Weston, "expect this assistance, unless we earnestly and constantly seek it: '*Ask*, and ye shall receive;' this is the invariable condition. And, Emily, we must watch as well as pray; and diligently use every means that God has appointed for the promotion of religion in the soul; never relaxing from that strict system of mental discipline in which Christian self-denial chiefly consists. It is to those who *do* the will of God that the promise is offered."

While Miss Weston was thus continually performing the noblest offices of human friendship, Emily's love for her became increasingly ardent; for she assumed no authority nor superiority in advising her: her manner was so humble and affectionate, and displayed at once such a delicate consideration of her feelings, and anxious solicitude for her happiness, that Emily's heart melted with grateful affection.

It has been said that there was nothing so dry, so difficult, nor so wholly foreign to her real inclinations, that Elizabeth would not have set herself about, if it had been recommended to her—or rather, if it had been likely to recommend her—at Stokely. It was therefore less surprising—as religion was the one

thing most attended to and valued there—that Elizabeth must now also become religious, or at least appear to be so.

Without premeditated hypocrisy, yet without sincerity, and wholly without earnestness, she professed to view the subject in a new light, and requested instruction upon it. She readily, and without gainsaying, acquiesced in new opinions: to many she might have appeared a more hopeful learner than Emily. Although her friends found it a difficult task to converse on the subject with Elizabeth, yet they spared no pains to give her right views, and to excite in her mind a real concern about it. She assented readily to everything that was said; believed whatever was stated; felt all that was described—and more; but they could not feel satisfied with her professions.

Indeed, the manner in which the Christian character was described and exemplified at Stokely, rendered it so difficult of imitation—there was so little credit to be gained by mere outward appearances or particular expressions, while so much stress was laid upon sincerity, humility, and spirituality of mind, that Elizabeth soon began to feel the support of her new professions almost intolerably irksome, and almost hopelessly difficult: perhaps she might have abandoned the attempt altogether, if she had not accidentally discovered a style of religious profession far easier of attainment.

Miss Pryke was confirmed in her suspicions of the

unsoundness of the new family by what had lately passed; and she attended the next Sunday, determined to make redoubled efforts at enlightening the school. The instructions she addressed to the children were indeed principally aimed at the teachers; and Elizabeth's form being next to Miss Pryke's, she could not avoid hearing a great deal of it. As she listened to her harangue, it seemed to her that it would be comparatively easy to be very religious after Miss Pryke's manner, and she was determined to gain the notice and good opinion of this enlightened teacher. So, as soon as the school was dismissed, Elizabeth made up to Miss Pryke, and shaking her by the hand, with a particular kind of smile, said, "I am sure I have reason to thank you for what I have heard this morning."

Miss Pryke started at this very unexpected address: however, it put her prejudices to flight in an instant. Notwithstanding her jealousy of the gay or genteel, she was doubly gratified at having proselyted one of this class. Her answer was studiously seasoned with spiritual flattery: but that and the succeeding conversations are not here recorded, because it would be painfully offensive to right feeling and good taste to repeat a discourse in which expressions might occur, which to use professedly in earnest, but without sincerity and reverence, is the worst kind of profaneness.

The conversation was renewed in the afternoon, and on the following Sunday: and Elizabeth was invited

to join a private meeting which was held once a week in Miss Pryke's parlour. She felt rather ashamed of accepting this invitation, and scarcely knew why she wished it; however, as it was winter, she stole in one evening.

Her entrance seemed for a time to distract the devotions of the little assembly, the appearance of a well-dressed lady was so very unusual among them. There was some bustle to make way for, and accommodate her; and she was beckoned and jostled, and pointed and pushed to the vacant arm-chair by the fireside: but Elizabeth with gracious bows declined this distinction, and seated herself—for she was fond of contrast—on one of the forms, between a very old woman and a spare, squalid-looking man, whose head was tied up with a blue handkerchief. Elizabeth's lace veil floated on his shabby shoulder, and her rich India shawl spread over the old woman's red cloak, who shook it off respectfully; while the good man squeezed himself up to his narrowest compass, and drove at his next neighbour to make more room.

When the service was over, Miss Pryke made up to Elizabeth, and shook hands with her: and so did two or three others, saying a word or two expressive of their pleasure at seeing her there; and there were some present whose hearts glowed with true Christian benevolence when they did so.

CHAPTER VII.

By this time Emily, without having studied for it, had gained the love and esteem of the whole family at Stokely. Elizabeth saw this was the case: and notwithstanding their impartial attentions—for none but the children appeared the fondest of Emily—Elizabeth perceived that she was not loved, esteemed, and, what to her was still worse, not admired so much. It was a long time before she could believe this; but when she did, when she felt quite sure of it, her mortification began to produce a degree of indifference to their opinion, and distaste to their company; and she wondered why she had taken so much pains to please them.

From this time her visits to Stokely became gradually less frequent; and as she felt Emily to be no longer a foil, but a rival, her company also became irksome to her; and although her professions when they met were the same as ever, Emily was hurt to perceive that Elizabeth shunned her society.

Her connexion with Miss Pryke tended much to promote this coolness; for it gave Elizabeth another object and other engagements; and such as were not very compatible with her intercourse with the Leddenhursts. She continued to attend the weekly meeting at

Miss Pryke's; for vanity is seldom dainty—and the notice she attracted, and the distinction she obtained even there, were agreeable to her. Her manners, her accomplishments, her dress, excited little attention among persons of her own rank, who could display much the same; but in all these respects she stood unrivalled in Miss Pryke's parlour, and they obtained for her that consideration which she loved.

Well had it been for Elizabeth if she had made as good use of these meetings as many—as most of those did who frequented them. But unfortunately, she only imitated what was not worth imitating. She soon acquired a facility in using the phrases current among these poor people, and even caught something of their particular looks and gestures. These peculiarities, which are often the genuine and natural expressions of earnest sincerity, uncontrolled by the delicacy which teaches the educated to conceal their feelings, too easily pass among some as signs of grace, while, among others, they are with as little discrimination concluded to be the symptoms of a canting hypocrisy.

When a poor Christian turns the key upon her comfortless dwelling, and sets off with her lantern and her Bible, to spend an hour in thinking and hearing of a place where there will be no more want, it is not surprising if she be more deeply interested and affected than those, who leave a comfortable drawing-room, an intelligent circle, or some interesting pursuit, and whose

"joy unspeakable" it costs them, perhaps, little effort to conceal.

Elizabeth, however, found herself in high esteem among this little company, especially with Miss Pryke, by whom she was studiously flattered and extolled. She had little opposition to encounter at home, on account of her new profession; for her parents disliked trouble too much to persecute: and Mrs. Palmer contented herself with exclaiming sometimes, when her daughter was setting off for the market-place—

"Bless me! Elizabeth, how can you make such a fool of yourself?"

Elizabeth's father and mother were people of the world in the most complete sense: they were "lovers of pleasure, and not lovers of God."

Mrs. Palmer was clever; and displayed admirable taste in laying out gardens, and fitting up rooms, and setting out dinners. Her grand object in life was to enjoy herself; and her selfishness was refined, and perfect in its kind. She was a good wife, a kind mother, an obliging neighbour, as far as she could be consistently with this object,-but no further. She had an easy, pleasing address; and her politeness was so assiduous that it looked almost like friendship. Whatever did not demand any real sacrifice of her own pleasure or convenience, was done, and done in the most obliging manner possible; but really to deny herself for the sake of another, was a species of virtue which she left

to be practised by such good sort of people as chose it: to her it appeared foolishness; especially as she could evade rendering a service with such masterly adroitness, with such a gentle, sympathising address, that the cold selfishness of her heart often escaped detection.

Her feelings were naturally violent: but she had such an extreme dislike of being uncomfortable that she rarely suffered them to be very troublesome to her. When the news arrived that her only and darling son had died abroad of the yellow fever, many people thought she would not long survive the intelligence. Her sorrow at first was ungovernable. She said she should never have another happy hour: but it is easier to be distracted for a week than to be sorrowful for life; and Mrs. Palmer discovered surprisingly soon that she was still in possession of all those good things on which her daily pleasure depended. She had no son, it was true; but she had a pleasant house, handsome furniture, luxurious fare, a healthy appetite, a fine person, and expensive ornaments. She could still walk, and drive, and visit, and receive company; and cultivate her fernery, and attend to her greenhouse, and arrange her cabinet; so that she recovered her cheerfulness rapidly. There was nothing in her mind with which sorrow could amalgamate; it was an unwelcome and unintelligible foreigner.

By her son's dying at a distance, she was spared what were, to her, the most shocking circumstances attending such an event.

Death was the one thing which she most disliked to think about; and she studiously avoided whatever was likely to remind her of it. She shrank from the survey of its gloomy apparatus; and was really glad that all that part of the affair was transacted so far off as Jamaica. The opening of the family vault was a circumstance she particularly dreaded; that was a place she did not like to think of; and still less to recollect, that she must herself, one day, lie down in that dark chamber. Whenever the unwelcome thought was forced upon her, she instantly recurred to the soundness of her constitution, and the vigorous means she used to preserve it. Besides which she avoided perils by water, and perils by land; she was the first to flee from contagion and every form of danger: thus, by a common but strange kind of deception, feeling as though to delay death were to escape it.

She thought it prudent, however, to make some provision for the distant day; and was, accordingly, constant at church, and charitable to the poor: by which means she concluded all would be safe, whenever she should be under the absolute necessity of going to heaven.

Mr. Palmer was a gentleman of ordinary capacity: but he could hunt, and shoot, and joke, and could occasionally swear; and contrived to do very well without thinking: for with these accomplishments, a good table, and a well-stocked cellar, he wanted neither for friends nor reputation.

It suited the taste both of Mr. and Mrs. Palmer to live expensively; whether it suited their income as well, they did not often inquire: for they avoided everything that was disagreeable: and to them it was very disagreeable to think about debts and prudence.

A short time after Elizabeth had begun to estrange herself from Stokely, Mrs. Leddenhurst received from her a parcel of books, which they had lent her; with a note thanking her for the loan of them, but declining the offer of others that had been proposed; adding, that "studies of this nature were too apt to encroach upon pursuits of higher importance."

"This is very true indeed," said Mrs. Leddenhurst, when she had read the note; "and I wish Elizabeth may now find herself more disposed to engage in pursuits of higher importance: but I am afraid she is making a mistake; at least I should question whether she will really employ the time she would have spent in reading these books to more advantage. I have known some good people," continued she, "who would scruple taking up a volume of general literature, or of philosophy or science, alleging that they had not the time to spare from better reading; yet their consciences would allow them to spend months in working a cap or a handkerchief; and they were in the habit of employing themselves in such domestic affairs as, in their circumstances, could be as well done by their servants."

"Elizabeth has learned this from some of her new

friends," said Mr. Leddenhurst: "it is no uncommon thing for persons of low education and contracted views to entertain this kind of jealousy against general information. Indeed, most things which their own circumstances will not permit them to enjoy, whatever they have not knowledge to understand, or taste to appreciate, they are apt to consider as inconsistent with real piety.

"Many very good people are subject to this prejudice, and are apt to consider as dangerous symptoms of conformity to the world, pursuits and refinements, which a little more knowledge, and a little more liberality, would convince them, are, in their way and in their place, aids and ornaments to a Christian character."

"The opposite extreme is, however, so much the more general and the most abused," said Miss Weston, "and this is so much the safer of the two, that one had need be cautious in censuring it. Where one person abstains from general reading for conscience, or rather for prejudice sake, how many are there who read bad books without any regard to conscience, and who are prejudiced against good ones!"

The Leddenhursts were sorry that Elizabeth had withdrawn herself so much from their society; especially as they did not feel perfectly satisfied with the present style of her professions. They did not, however, venture to form so decided a judgment concerning her as

was declared of Emily by some of the good people at Miss Pryke's.

Emily had no ambition to gain their favour; indeed she paid too little regard to public opinion: and her dread and abhorrence of unfelt professions led her to avoid those very appearances and expressions which might have induced them to form a more favourable judgment of her piety. They shook their heads at her youthful sprightliness; while Elizabeth was pronounced "a gracious and growing character."

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE spring evening, Elizabeth had taken her accustomed seat by the side of Miss Pryke's counter. While they were talking, she sometimes put aside the shawls and ribands that blinded the window, with the end of her parasol, to see what was passing without. But there was nothing to be seen except some children at play in the middle of the square—and Mr. Preston standing in his usual position at his shop-door—and old Mr. and Mrs. Parsons on returning from their evening walk—and the setting sun shining on the old market-cross, just as it did a hundred years ago.

It was seldom that anything happened to disturb the tranquillity of this remote place: except that a show, or a conjuror, or a company of strolling players, sometimes

stopped to amuse the inhabitants for a night or two, in their way to the county town. But suddenly their conversation was interrupted by the sound of distant music. Elizabeth started from her seat, exclaiming:

"Hark, Miss Pryke! what can that be? the bass-drum, I declare!"

For now it came nearer and louder; and presently a full band, in gay green and white, playing a lively march, followed by the regiment, and all the boys and girls of Broadisham, crowded into the market-place.

"I am so fond of military music!" said Elizabeth, as she stood nodding to the tune; while rank after rank passed the shop-door.

This was a lively evening for Broadisham: all was bustle and animation: maids and mistresses, masters and men, appeared at their doors and windows. Trains of soldiers, stooping their tall caps, were seen entering the lowly doors of the Angel, the King's Arms, and the Red Lion; while a party of officers assembled before the gate of the new Hotel.

The teachers of the Sunday-school had been employed for some time past in making frocks and tippets for the children, and as soon as they were completed, an evening was appointed for the distribution in the school-room. This evening being arrived, and the parties assembled, they were about to proceed to business, when Emily proposed waiting a little while for Elizabeth, who had

not arrived; they waited, but at last were obliged to go on without her.

It was a pleasant task to take off the old, patched, worn, and torn garments, and to replace them with new and comfortable dresses. The whole school soon appeared in a neat livery; and while the children, in stiff attitudes, kept surveying themselves and each other, and looking almost as much ashamed as they were delighted, the ladies, not less pleased, stood beholding the happy crowd. Emily enjoyed it exceedingly, as with great animation she stood rolling up the old tattered garments, and admiring the new.

It was nearly dark before the children were dismissed; and just as the ladies were coming down stairs, they observed a light dressy figure making her way rather impatiently through the crowd of children that was issuing from the school-room door. Till the moment she passed, when the light from a chemist's shop shone full upon her, they did not discover that it was Elizabeth. Emily spoke to her, but she was looking another way, and appeared not to observe any of the party, who stood gazing at her as she passed swiftly on.

"She is going to this officers' ball," said Mrs. Leddenhurst; "there is her mother, I see, just before."

"I am surprised at that!" said Emily.

"And I am concerned," said Miss Weston.

"I am concerned, but not much surprised," said Mrs. Leddenhurst.

"But I have heard her say so much against those amusements lately," added Emily.

"I should have been more surprised if she had said less," said Mrs. Leddenhurst; "but we will not condemn her, perhaps she is going against her inclinations. I only fear that if she once begin to break through the restraints she has lately imposed upon herself, she will return to these things with increased avidity."

As they passed the assembly-room, they saw that the chandeliers were lighted up; the dancing had commenced: and they could distinctly hear the sound of the inspiring music. Emily had trod many a measure there, and she could scarcely forbear stepping to the well-known air. She was really fond of dancing; but she had declined attending this ball without regret. Mr. and Mrs. Leddenhurst had explained to her their reasons for abstaining from these diversions in a way that had convinced her. Without shaking their heads, and speaking of dancing as containing in itself some mysterious evil which could not be explained, they simply stated the difficulty of preserving in such assemblies that temper of mind which a Christian should always maintain; that they were apt to conduce to frivolity of mind, and to expose young and old to many temptations.

The offence that would inevitably be given to many pious people, whose prejudices, even, we are expressly enjoined to consult, was mentioned as another reason,

and a sufficient one, for abstaining, independently of all other considerations.

"And if resigning such paltry pleasures as these," said Mr. Leddenhurst, "be considered too great a sacrifice to be made for Christ's sake, what are we to understand by forsaking *all* to follow him? But even," continued he, "if I could attend these places without any injury to my own mind, or any offence to the minds of others, I really should not feel disposed to go dancing through a world so full, as this world is, of sin and misery."

Emily, however, needed not many arguments on this subject. When her mind began to be filled with serious thoughts, she did not want to dance, nor care to mix much with people whose thoughts are all about this world; yet she had never before been so uniformly cheerful as now. She returned to Stokely with her friends, and spent the remainder of the evening so pleasantly with them, that she quite forgot the assembly-room.

How it happened that Elizabeth was at the officers' ball, must now be explained.

One of the officers was an old acquaintance of her father's; and he, with several of the others, were invited to dine at his house.

Elizabeth had not quite finished dressing herself for this occasion, when she was called down stairs to Miss Pryke, who waited to speak with her in the hall.

"I did not hear till just now," said she, glancing as she spoke at the various parts of Elizabeth's dress, "I did not hear till this minute, that all these people were coming to dinner here to-day; and as I was convinced you would not wish to be in the way of it, I came to request the pleasure of your company to spend the day at *ours*, and I hope——"

"Thank you," said Elizabeth, "you're extremely good, I'm sure, and I should enjoy it exceedingly, for, you know, it is excessively distressing to me: but, indeed, I'm afraid I could not get off any how, for, you see, my mother would be so much displeased. So thank you, good morning," said she, withdrawing rather abruptly, and leaving Miss Pryke not quite satisfied with the manner in which her invitation had been declined.

There are ways of being irresistible without flirting: and Elizabeth did not find it requisite on the present occasion to throw off entirely the character she had assumed. When she made her appearance, there was a look of childish simplicity and timidity, with a becoming expression of being distressed at the presence of so many gentlemen: hastening to take refuge among the ladies, she seated herself beside Miss Oliver, who was one of the party, with whom she began chatting in an under voice, with playful familiarity.

During dinner, the subject of the proposed ball was introduced, and Lieutenant Robinson, a young officer

who sat next Elizabeth, began talking about the pleasure of meeting her there. But Elizabeth acknowledged she did not care for these amusements. "There was too much publicity in them," she said, "to suit her taste: she was aware she exposed herself to the imputation of singularity; but, in fact, she preferred pleasures of a more private and domestic kind." While the lieutenant was expressing his grief, surprise, concern, and astonishment at this declaration, a lady who sat opposite, exclaimed,—

"Oh, we must not expect to see Miss Palmer at the assembly-room; she has quite forsaken our innocent amusements since she has been such a saint."

At the word saint, all the company laughed; laughed rather more than Elizabeth liked, and dreading further exposure, she joined in the laugh, saying,—

"Oh, pray indeed, you must not call me a saint! I only wish I was more of one than I am."

"But, Mrs. Palmer, ma'am," said the lieutenant, appealing to her mother, "Miss Palmer surely cannot be serious; let me beg of you to intercede with her, that we may have the honour of her company to-morrow evening."

"I shall certainly endeavour to prevail with Elizabeth," said her mother.

"There," said he, "Mrs. Palmer takes our part; you will not refuse her, I'm convinced?"

"If my mother wishes it, certainly not," replied Elizabeth, with a submissive smile.

Thus she had promised to go to the ball before she recollected her pre-engagement at the school-room; and she could not break her promise; besides which, in the course of this evening, Lieutenant Robinson had rendered himself so agreeable that all prior considerations rapidly gave way.

When she was alone in her room that night she began to speculate upon the posture of affairs. She thought for a moment of the opinion that would be entertained of her by her friends in the market-place for going to the ball; and she thought for two moments of what would be thought of it at Stokely. But Elizabeth now found herself engaged in business of importance, to which trifles must be sacrificed; and the tide that was drawing her back into a world from which her heart had never been alienated, was but feebly stemmed by principle or conscience.

Elizabeth had probably been deceiving herself as well as others. Those who are little accustomed to self-examination, who look more at actions than at motives, may go a great way in false professions without deliberate hypocrisy. Perhaps she was herself surprised to find how easily her scruples were overcome, and her professions laid aside. She felt less dread of the act itself, than shame at the idea of its being discovered. Her mind was not indeed at this time in a state for making cool calculations.

Religion, friends, consistency, reputation, were hastily

thrown into one scale, and Lieutenant Robinson's gold epaulette into the other—and thus the point was decided.

CHAPTER IX.

FOR more than a fortnight after the night of the ball, Elizabeth had not been seen by any of her old friends. At length Emily was surprised by a call from her; and still more by her proposing to accompany her that evening on a visit to Stokely.

"It is so long since I have been," said she, "that they must think me quite inattentive; and if you would like to go this evening, I shall be happy to attend you."

Emily readily agreed to this unexpected proposal: indeed she was very glad of it; especially as she remarked a certain thoughtfulness and pensiveness in Elizabeth's manner, which made her hope she was sorry for what had lately occurred.

During their walk Elizabeth was unusually silent and absent; and she continued so after their arrival, although she had received the same free and cordial welcome as usual. Many ineffectual efforts were made to enliven her; and at last Mrs. Leddenhurst—who had remarked that Elizabeth liked to be asked to play—proposed that she should sit down to the instrument.

"What shall I play?" said she, turning over the leaves of the music-book. "The Soldier's Adieu—that's a sweet thing! shall I try it?"

"If you please," said Mrs. Leddenhurst.

Elizabeth played, and began to sing; but stopped presently, as though unable to proceed.

"Why don't you sing?" said Emily. "Do sing!"

"I cannot sing very well this evening," said she, looking distressed: and added aside to Emily, "You must not ask me to sing those words."

After attempting a few more notes, she stopped again, and leaning back upon Emily, begged for air and water.

The window was thrown open, and Mr. Leddenhurst led her to the sofa; where, after a few hysterical sighs, she found herself a little better.

"Emily, my love, lend me your arm," said she, rising; "I shall soon recover in the air; it's nothing but the heat of the room."

So Emily led her friend to an arbour in the garden; where, as soon as they were seated, Elizabeth leaned her head upon Emily's neck, and burst into tears.

"What is the matter," said Emily? "Are you ill, dear Elizabeth—or has any thing grieved you?"

She continued to weep and sigh, but made no answer.

"I am sure," resumed Emily, after a short silence, "I do not desire to know anything you wish to conceal; but if I can guess why you are so unhappy——"

"Oh, then I have betrayed myself!" exclaimed Elizabeth, hiding her face.

"Betrayed yourself! what do you mean, Elizabeth? I only thought that perhaps you were sorry about

going to the ball, and giving up the Sunday-school; and if——"

"Oh, my dear," interrupted Elizabeth, "you do not know, you cannot guess; it is quite impossible that any one should ever discover the cause of my uneasiness: that must ever remain a secret in my own bosom."

"Then certainly I shall not inquire," said Emily. "Will you like to walk?"

"No, stay a moment; forgive my weakness, Emily, and let me talk to you about my sorrow, although I cannot reveal the source of it."

"As long as you please; but take care, or I shall find it out."

"Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear me!" said Elizabeth.

"Dear me!" said Emily.

"Do you think Mr. Leddenhurst observed the words of that song?" inquired Elizabeth.

"I can't tell, indeed," replied Emily.

"How silly it was of me to attempt to play it!"

"Why so?"

Elizabeth looked down, and sighed.

"How beautifully the sun is setting!" observed Emily, who found it difficult to maintain her part of the conversation.

At length Elizabeth broke another silence by saying, "Emily, I know I may confide in you; will you promise faithfully never to betray me, if I tell you all my heart?"

"Yes, you may depend upon me," said Emily.

"But how shall I confess my weakness?" resumed Elizabeth; "cannot you guess? Oh, Emily, if you had ever loved, you would know how to feel for me!"

"Dear! are you in love?" said Emily, simply.

"Hush! my dear creature!" cried Elizabeth; "what but," continued she, in a low voice, "what but this fatal attachment could have led me to act as I have done?"

"Do you know," said Emily, after running over in her mind the list of all the beaux and bachelors she knew,—"do you know I am entirely at a loss to think who you can be at all attached to."

"Oh, my dear, that fatal regiment!" cried Elizabeth.

"Already!" said Emily.

"You do not know him, or you would not be surprised."

"Is it that tall, brave-looking officer that I have seen walking with your father."

"No, that's Captain Scott; he is not particularly tall; you'd not be so much struck at first sight: but indeed he has paid me such attentions! though I know he is only flirting with me," said Elizabeth, sighing.

"Then indeed, Elizabeth, I hope you will endeavour to overcome it," said Emily; "and as it is so very recent I should think with a little effort——"

"A little effort! Oh, Emily, you know nothing about it; never, never; it cannot be overcome!"

"How are you now, Elizabeth?" said Miss Weston, who appeared at that instant.

"Thank you, better," said Elizabeth, starting.

"She is a great deal better," said Emily, blushing.

"I feared you would stay too long in the evening air, said Miss Weston; and, supported by her two friends, Elizabeth returned to the company.

Elizabeth had long wished for an opportunity of being an heroine; for which nothing had been wanting but a hero; and this being so unexpectedly supplied, it was no wonder that, mistaking ambition of conquest and partiality to scarlet cloth for love, she should presently exhibit its interesting phenomena.

She had not, however, been guilty of any misrepresentation in saying that Lieutenant Robinson had "paid her such attentions;" for this young man had fallen in love with Elizabeth; and a short time after this arbour scene, and after about a month's acquaintance—during which time he spent every morning at her work-table, and every evening in her company—he made his proposals to her father, which meeting with the approbation of the whole family, he became her acknowledged lover.

Elizabeth would have been more gratified at making a conquest of a man of sense; and she would have preferred altogether having a sensible man for her husband: however, she had made a conquest, and she was going to be *Mrs. Robinson.*

Sometimes, indeed, during the morning *tête-à-tête*, she felt a little dissatisfied with the strain of her lover's conversation: for it was surprising what silly things he

would say rather than not say anything; but then Elizabeth thought it was because he was in love; and any such unfavourable impression generally wore off during evening parade, when the lieutenant was manœuvring at the head of his company; and while the band was playing, she was sure she was in love with him.

After evening parade the band was ordered to play for an hour in the market-place, for the amusement of the ladies who were assembled on these occasions, and promenaded up and down the square.

It was then that Elizabeth enjoyed the *éclat* of her conquest. While she appeared laughing and talking with her lover among her less fortunate acquaintance, who were walking about in unattended rows, her purpose was served as well, or better by a blockhead than a genius.

Sometimes she would stop awhile to chat with them, and her nods and bows were dealt about lavishly, and with unwonted cordiality, to everybody.

"Who are all these?" said Lieutenant Robinson, one of these evenings, as a new party entered the square.

"Gracious me! all the Leddenhursts," said Elizabeth, who would rather have avoided the interview.

"And who is that pretty figure in the cottage bonnet?" said he, as they came nearer.

"It's only Emily Grey," answered Elizabeth.

"How d'ye do, how d'ye do, Emily, my love, how are you?" said she, addressing her friends as they advanced.

She now introduced Lieutenant Robinson, and would have passed on, but they all seemed disposed to stay and chat, and Mr. Leddenhurst entered into conversation with her lover.

Never had he appeared to so much disadvantage to Elizabeth as at this moment, now that she saw him, not for herself, but for them; saw him, too, by the side of Mr. Leddenhurst.

Her hand had fallen from his arm, as they approached, and she now began talking as fast as possible to Mrs. Leddenhurst, Miss Weston, and Emily, to divert their attention from the conversation that was passing between the gentlemen.

Emily, who had raised her expectations rather unreasonably high, of a being whom it was possible to love in three weeks, was nearly guilty of the rudeness of starting when she first beheld the mean figure, and fiercely vacant countenance, of her friend's admirer.

"Is it possible!" said she to herself, and she looked about to avoid meeting the eye of Elizabeth.

In the meantime the lieutenant continued running on in his usual style of sprightly dulness to Mr. Leddenhurst, who stood looking down upon him with an eye of keen but candid observation.

"What a monstrous curious old cross you've got here!" said he, staring up, and tapping it with his cane.

"Well, good night!" said Elizabeth: "it's cold standing in the wind;" and she walked off with her lover,

feeling more uncomfortable than ladies always do when they walk off with their lovers.

When they reached home, Elizabeth threw herself on the sofa, saying,—

"Don't talk to me; I am tired this evening, Mr. Robinson."

Thus repulsed, he walked backwards and forwards in the room for some time, half whistling; till, stopping on a sudden, he exclaimed,—

"That Emily, what d'ye call her, is a confounded pretty girl!"

"Do you think so?" said Elizabeth, rousing up: "Well, she does look rather pretty in her bonnet."

Here the lieutenant resumed his walk and his whistle; but the remark had a fortunate effect upon Elizabeth. The momentary jealousy made him appear surprisingly more agreeable, and worth securing: and while she sat watching him as he paced up and down in the dusk, she said to herself, "He whistles uncommonly well!"

Very soon after Lieutenant Robinson's proposals had been accepted, the regiment, which was quartered at Broadisham, received orders to remove to a distant county. It was expected they would march in three weeks; and as both he and Mr. Palmer were anxious to conclude the affair as soon as possible, it was agreed that the marriage should take place accordingly.

Elizabeth, therefore, suddenly plunged in the agreeable confusion of preparation, had little leisure to study the

character and qualifications of her intended husband. He was but one of a great variety of important concerns that now distracted her attention. Silks and satins, laces and jewels, trunks and travelling-dresses, her silver tea-pot, her silver-mounted dressing-box, and her scarlet beau, were objects of alternate and equal interest. Wholly intent upon the *éclat* of her bridal, she had as little inclination as opportunity to look forward to the months and years when she would be a wife, but no longer a bride.

CHAPTER X.

About this time, Eleanor Jones, the invalid mentioned early in this history, having lingered through a painful winter, died peacefully.

Miss Weston and Emily had visited her frequently during her illness, and they were present at the last scene.

Death, as personified and decorated by poetry, Emily had frequently contemplated; but she was unacquainted with the realities of a dying bed.

The moment they entered her room, they perceived the altered expression of the sick girl's countenance; and although Emily had never seen it before, she saw there was death in her face. She felt the shock, but would not turn away: "for if I cannot bear even to see it, how shall I endure it?" thought she.

Soon after they entered, the poor girl was seized with a convulsive spasm, which lasted several minutes.

"Oh, see!" said Emily, "cannot we help her? Is there nothing that would give her any relief?"

"Nothing, my dear," said Miss Weston softly; "it will soon be over."

"Dear, dear creature!" cried her distressed mother: "please God to release her! for I cannot bear this!"

When the spasm was over, her features became composed, and she looked round upon them with an expression of joyful serenity.

"These are only the struggles of nature," said Miss Weston; "'the sting of death is sin;' she does not feel that."

At this she smiled, and her lips moved, but they could not distinguish what was said.

She then lay for some time quite tranquil: they watched her in silence—and at length perceived that she had ceased to breathe.

Miss Weston led the mother down stairs; while Emily remained fixed to the spot, gazing on the placid corpse. She looked round on the low, tattered chamber, and thought she should never again wish for the vanities of so short a life.

"This is how they must all end," she thought; "and death would look just the same if this poor bed were a state canopy."

It seemed but a moment, not worth caring for, before she herself must lie down by her side.

Her contemplations were soon interrupted by the entrance of Miss Weston.

"Come, Emily, my love," said she, "we can do nothing more here, but we may still comfort her poor mother."

"I should like to stay longer," said Emily; "I never saw death before; how strange, and awful, and beautiful it is!"

"You have stayed long enough now," said her friend, and she led her out of the chamber; and as soon as they saw that the mourning mother had said and wept her utmost, they took leave, with many assurances of continued friendship.

When they opened the cottage door, they found it was noon-day, and bright sunshine. Emily had not shed a tear before, but they overflowed at the sight of the bright fields and clear blue sky.

They walked on silently to the entrance of the town.

"Had not we better go the back way? You will not go through the town this morning, Miss Weston?" said Emily.

"Why not, my dear?"

"I always avoid it when I can," replied Emily, "and just now especially."

"Unfortunately I have an errand in the town," said Miss Weston, "at Mrs. Eve's."

"At Mrs. Eve's!" said Emily.

They went on; and Emily was obliged to endure the sight of the shops and people, looking as busy as usual.

Mrs. Eve's windows were set out with spring fashions; and when they went in, they found Elizabeth, with her mother, and other ladies, making purchases, and examining the new assortment.

"I was just wishing for you," said Elizabeth, "to give me your opinion of these silks: which should you prefer, Emily, this rose colour, or the pale blue?"

"They are both extremely pretty," said Miss Weston, "but the blue, I think, is the most delicate."

"I advise you to go up and see the millinery," said Mrs. Palmer to Miss Weston and Emily; "and really you'll be delighted. Mrs. Eve has some uncommonly pretty things come down, I assure you."

"We have something quite new in flowers, ladies," said one of the young milliners, taking down a tempting drawer. "That's a sweet thing, ma'am!" said she, holding up a quivering spray before Emily; who, sickening at the sight, made her escape as soon as she could to the opposite counter; where Elizabeth still stood wavering between the rose colour and the blue.

"Yes, Elizabeth," said she, "they are very pretty; but we have just come from Eleanor Jones's, and have seen her die."

"Die! good gracious, have you? She is gone at last, poor soul, is she?" said Elizabeth. "Dear me!" added

she, perceiving that Emily expected her to say something more.

"I wish you had been with us," said Emily; "you cannot think what a striking scene it was: I think I shall not soon forget it."

"It must indeed be very affecting, I should think," said Elizabeth, still glancing at the rival tints.

"I will walk back with you now, if you would wish to see her," continued Emily; she is looking so placid and tranquil: would you like to go?"

"My dear, you must excuse me," said Elizabeth; "my nerves are so weak, I never could endure to see a corpse."

"Why, she is only looking as we ourselves shall very soon."

"Goodness me, my dear Emily!" cried Elizabeth; "but really I have not a moment to spare—you know how I am circumstanced; besides," said she, looking up and down the street, "I am expecting Frederick every instant; he was to call here for us half an hour ago."

"Poor Elizabeth!" said Emily, as soon as they had got out of Mrs. Eve's shop, "how completely she is absorbed in these things; and how trifling, how disgusting they are! I hope I shall never again waste a moment or a thought about them!"

"They are trifling certainly," said Miss Weston; "but I think they are only disgusting when they are made affairs of importance, and suffered to engage a dispropor-

tionate share of time and attention. 'There is a time for all things,' you know, a little time even for attending to the trifles of life. It would not pain me, I confess, to see Elizabeth just now busily engaged in these affairs, if I were sure they were kept in due subordination to better things; but there is the danger."

"I wish she had been with us to-day," said Emily, "that she might have felt, as I did, the transition from that room to Mrs. Eve's exhibition.

"It may be desirable sometimes," said Miss Weston, "to view the gaieties of life in such strong contrasts; but it is not intended that we should walk through the world only by a sepulchral light; nor that we should be always turning aside from its pleasant fields, to wander among the tombs. Indeed the mind may take a melancholy pleasure in being familiarized with such objects, without making any real progress in holiness."

The first time Emily called upon the widow Jones, after her daughter's funeral, she found her in a great deal of trouble.

The expenses of a long illness had reduced her so low that she was unable to pay her rent, which had already run on several weeks. By Eleanor's death she had also lost her chief means of support; being herself too feeble to go out to work, as she formerly had done. So that, with grievous lamentations, she told Emily she must turn out of her cottage and end her days in the workhouse.

Emily, much concerned at this account, set off to consult with her friends at Stokely. At the outskirts of the park there was a little building, covered with ivy, which had formerly been a summer-house, but was now disused, and falling into decay. It struck Emily, as she passed, that with a little repair it might make a comfortable asylum for the poor widow. She went in full of this scheme; and before she had exhausted half her arguments obtained Mr. Leddenhurst's free consent. He promised to have it put in proper repair, and commissioned Emily to superintend the alterations, as she expressed much anxiety lest the workmen should tear down the ivy, or lop the branches which spread so prettily over the thatch.

Mrs. Leddenhurst engaged to supply the necessary furniture; and all was to be ready by Midsummer-day, the day on which Mrs. Jones had warning to quit her cottage. To increase the pleasure, Emily proposed that in the meantime everything should be kept a profound secret from the widow; but Mrs. Leddenhurst suggested whether, for the sake of that momentary surprise, it would be right to keep her so long in uneasiness at the thought of going to the workhouse.

"I forgot that," said Emily; but she looked so much disappointed that Miss Weston proposed to hold out only an indefinite hope, which might allay her anxiety, without letting her know the actual good fortune that awaited her.

Emily now went to work with alacrity. There was much to be done which she undertook to execute herself, besides giving directions to the workmen; and she had a great deal of trouble in persuading them implicitly to follow her orders. They had so little notion of the picturesque that if she had not kept a constant watch over them the place would, in her opinion, have been completely spoiled.

There was a little plot in front, overgrown with nettles, which she had cleared, and was converting into a flower garden. The children were very much pleased with being employed under Emily on this occasion. They were permitted to weed and dig, and to do whatever services she required. To adorn the entrance, she contrived to form a rustic porch, with a seat of mossy logs and branches; and she led over it a wild honeysuckle and a white jessamine which had long grown there and crept over the front of the building.

One day, while Emily was busily employed in twining the sprays of her favourite jessamine over this porch, she was surprised by her friend Elizabeth.

"My dear Emily," said she, "I'm just coming to bid you good-bye: I am going to be married to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Emily, and her hand fell from the bough.

"Yes, indeed," replied Elizabeth, "I did not expect it would be quite so soon; but the regiment is ordered off immediately, and Frederick is anxious we should

spend a few days at Cheltenham before we join : and I assure you I am quite fagged with packing and preparing. But I would not go on any account without seeing you," said she, with a voice and look of apathy that went to Emily's heart.

She sat down in her porch, and burst into tears.

But Elizabeth was too busy and too happy to weep. Just come from the important bustle of preparation, the sight of Emily in her garden-hat and gloves, so intent upon fitting up a house for an old woman, excited that kind of contemptuous pity with which the simple pleasures of simple people are commonly regarded by such observers as Elizabeth.

After standing an awkward minute, wishing Emily had not cried, she added—

"Well, Emily, my dear, I must not stay."

"Stay one moment," said Emily ; "I was thinking of the old days when we were children, and used to play together under the chestnut trees."

Elizabeth was touched by the sudden recollection, and, without an effort, a tear came into her eye. She sat down by her friend, and they embraced affectionately.

"Elizabeth, I hope you will be happy," said Emily ; "I hope Mr. Robinson is——"

"Oh, he is indeed," interrupted Elizabeth ; "I have no doubt I shall : he is the most pleasant, generous creature in the world. I wish you had seen more of him, Emily ; but really, of late, you know, I have been

so particularly occupied. But, indeed, I must be gone!" said she, rising; and they parted with a hasty embrace.

Emily followed her to the gate, and watched her with tearful eyes to the winding of the road, as she went briskly on.

Elizabeth slept soundly in consequence of this day's fatigue, and awoke the next morning with only a confused idea of what was before her; but the red beams of the rising sun, shining full upon her white wreath and veil, brought the strange reality to her recollection. She started up, but the clock struck four—only four! So she lay down again, fell into a waking dose, and dreamed that it was only a dream.

At six o'clock, the maid who had nursed her from her infancy came to awaken her. She looked at her young mistress as she lay asleep, and, brushing a tear from her eyes, she said, "Come, Miss Elizabeth, dear, it's time to get up, ma'am!"

At twelve o'clock, the carriage that was to take Elizabeth away stood at her father's door. Soon after she appeared, covered with a splendid veil, and was handed in by the smiling lieutenant; when, bowing, and waving her hand to the party assembled at the street-door, they drove off.

It was a beautiful morning; the bells rung merrily, and as it passed the end of Church-street, they outnoised the rattling of the carriage.

Elizabeth, in passing through her native town, felt an increased glow of satisfaction from observing her friends and neighbours going about the ordinary business of the day. Some were washing, and some were brewing. Parties of children, with their slates and work-bags, were sauntering to school; and there were the pale teachers peeping over the tall window-blinds, to see the bride; and there sat Miss Oliver with her hair in paper; and the row of young women at Mrs. Eve's all together raised their heads from their work at the sound of the wheels; while she, a gay and youthful bride, was leaving them all to their monotonous employments: she was married, and she was going to Cheltenham.

CHAPTER XI.

——"No, this way," cried Emily, as she was conducting the widow Jones to her new dwelling.

"Dear Miss! where are you a-fetching of me? 'twas never worth a while to turn such an old woman as me out of my house and home," said she, in a crying tone, as she went hobbling after Emily.

"But I tell you," said Emily, "you should not be thinking of your old cottage now." Yet, in spite of her remonstrances, the widow Jones went groaning and grumbling all the way to Stokely.

Richard, and Caroline, and Lucy were anxiously waiting their arrival at the garden gate.

Emily, as she approached, called eagerly to them to stand out of the way that they might not intercept the view of the dwelling; which, with the little white gate and rustic porch peeping under the trees, had certainly a very pretty effect.

"What do you think of that?" said she, looking eagerly at the widow.

"Deary me!" said she.

"Do you think it pretty? Then this is where you are to live; so do not be fretting any more about your old cottage, for you are to live here," repeated Emily. "Isn't it a pretty little retired place for you, now?"

"I thank you, and his honour, and the ladies, a thousand and a thousand times," said she, casting a forlorn glance at the thick shade that environed her dwelling.

"What! don't you like it?" said Emily.

"Why, dear, I can't mislike it," said she. "Here's a power of trees, to be sure! but 'twill be more lightsome come winter."

"But that is the beauty of it," said Emily. "Come, then, and see if it is not comfortable inside."

Emily, indeed, had spared no pains to make it so. The kettle was now boiling on the fire, and the little deal table was set out ready for tea. The widow's favourite cat had been dexterously conveyed away that

morning, and Caroline and Lucy had kept her in safe custody all day. With indefatigable care and coaxing, and after various obstinate attempts to escape, they at last succeeded in making her lie down to sleep upon the hearth.

"Well-a-day! there's our puss!" exclaimed the widow, now looking really pleased.

This was the only thing that did not look strange to her, and novelty, much as it charms the young, is itself a grievance to the old.

Emily now only waited to point out some of the principal beauties and conveniences of the new abode.

"See," said she, setting open the door, "I'll tell you what you should do these fine summer evenings. You must bring your knitting, and sit here to work in the porch; you'll look so pretty sitting to knit in the porch! and be sure," added she, "that you do not tear down the ivy that grows over your little window."

The widow Jones having promised to do and not to do, all that she thought it reasonable to require, Emily only stood a moment at the door, surveying, with a picturesque eye, the group formed by the old woman, her cat, and the tea-table; and then took leave, saying, she would "now leave her to enjoy herself."

The evening before this, Emily had put the finishing stroke to her work; and when it was done, she thought it looked such a snug little seclusion, that she very much longed to live there herself. It was a calm summer

evening; she was alone, and she sat down in the porch to enjoy it, just at the time when the moonlight began to prevail over the twilight; and Emily began to feel very poetical.

A scrap of paper that was left there rendered the temptation irresistible; but she had written only a few lines, when Mr. Leddenhurst appeared at the garden gate.

"What are you about now, Emily?" said he.

Emily put by her verses, coloured, and said, "Nothing, sir;" and then took him in to admire her contrivances. He did admire them, and she thought no more about her verses till she got home again, and found herself alone in her father's parlour. She then read them over, merely to see if they were worth finishing; and she took a fresh piece of paper, and was just getting into the spirit of it again, when she heard her father's knock at the door: and he, with several other gentlemen, came bustling in, talking altogether, and very earnestly, about a parish dispute which was to be decided the next day at the county assizes.

"I tell you, sir, they must lose their cause," said one of them—"Miss Grey, how d'ye do, ma'am?—and I'll give you my reasons, Mr. Grey——"

"Take off these things, child," said her father, pushing away Emily's papers rather disrespectfully, and laying a pile of law-books on the table.

Emily took them off, and made her escape as fast as possible to her own room, thinking, as she went, how

foolish it was of her to write poetry. The verses were put by in a folio with several similar effusions, of which some were better, and some worse. They were mostly in a strain that to the uninitiated might appear inconsistent with Emily's lively and flourishing appearance; but nothing could be more unreasonable than requiring young writers of poetry to "prove their words;" unless it were, inflicting upon them some of the extraordinary things they sometimes wish for themselves when they are rhyming.

The verses Emily began writing this evening in the widow's porch were as follow:—

Say, Spirit, if thou wanderest nigh,
Of every sylvan dale;
What forms, unseen by mortal eye,
Frequent this leafy vale?

Perchance 'twas once the flowery court
Of merry elfin king;
Where fairy people loved to sport,
And tread the nightly ring.

The sun, descending down the sky,
In floods of misty light,
Surveys it with his golden eye,
And makes the valley bright.

The moon, who rideth in her pride,
At solemn midnight hour;
And sheds her radiance far and wide,
On turret, dome, and tower;

Here sleeps upon the chequer'd glade;
Nor finds a softer rest
On myrtle bower, or classic shade,
Or ocean's silver breast.

And oft would I, alone, resort
To this seclusion dear;
Uncheck'd to breathe the ardent thought
Or shed th' unquestioned tear.

O Nature! how thy charms beguile
Or soothe our cares to sleep!
Thou seem'st to smile with those who smile,
And weep with those who weep!

The vernal tint, the summer breeze,
E'en winter's aspect drear,
Thy woods, and vales, and skies, and seas,
Like friendship soothe and cheer.

The soul in thy serene retreats
Communion sweet may find;
But gay assemblies, crowded streets,
Are desert to the mind.

The throng where giddy mortals press,
Is solitude to me;
But Nature, in her wildest dress,
Refined society.

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CHAPTER XII.

ELIZABETH had scarcely been married two months when she received the news of her father's death. He was taken off suddenly by a fit of apoplexy, and his affairs were found in so embarrassed a state, that a narrow jointure alone secured his widow from absolute want.

In consequence of this change of fortune, Mrs. Palmer immediately retired to a distance from Broadisham; and, about the same time, Elizabeth despatched the following letter to Mr. Leddenhurst.

"CHESTER, *September* 23.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"It would be absolutely impossible for me to attempt to describe the variety of painful emotions I experience at this moment, in taking the liberty of addressing you. Nothing, indeed, but a conviction of your extreme goodness could have emboldened me to undertake so awkward a task.

"The poignant affliction occasioned by the loss of my lamented father needed no aggravation; but I am persuaded you cannot be a stranger to the very unpleasant embarrassments in which, in consequence of his untimely decease, his affairs are involved. The result to us, as you may readily imagine, has been particularly unfor-

tunate. The truth is, my dear sir, that Lieutenant Robinson, depending on those resources of which we have been so fatally disappointed, has contracted some trifling debts, which it is, in fact, out of his power immediately to discharge. He has, you know, considerable expectations, but these are of no present avail; and I am persuaded you would be greatly concerned were I to relate the excessively unpleasant circumstances to which we have been exposed for some time past. In consequence of which I have been induced to address you, and, encouraged by a recollection of your former goodness, to request the loan of two hundred pounds, if perfectly convenient; and which there is not the smallest doubt but we shall in a very short time be able to return.

"You may be surprised that Mr. Robinson does not apply to his relations; the fact is, that the uncle, to whom he has repeatedly written on the subject, is a low man, in trade, of very sordid and contracted ideas, who obstinately refuses the smallest assistance, except on conditions with which it is absolutely impossible we should comply.

"This determined me to trouble you with the present application; indeed, there is no individual in the whole circle of my friends on whose generosity and friendship I could so firmly rely. And need I say, under what infinite obligations we shall consider ourselves, should you be induced to comply with the request?

"Lieutenant Robinson begs to join me in kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Leddenhurst; and believe me, my dear Sir, with the greatest respect, your most obliged friend,

"ELIZABETH ROBINSON."

A tremendous secret was revealed to Elizabeth a very short time after her marriage, in a letter from this uncle. Lieutenant Robinson had been—a linendraper.

He was a weak, hot-headed young man;—a dislike to business—that is, to exertion—and an opportunity he once had of trying on a military hat, inspired him with an ardent desire for the profession of arms. And at the expiration of his apprenticeship to his uncle, deaf to the remonstrances of his prudent friends, he commenced the life of a gentleman, and invested the whole of a small sum to which he was entitled under his father's will in the purchase of a commission.

In order to escape the ridicule of his brother-officers, and to remove, if possible, the suspicions they evidently entertained of his origin, he thought it requisite to plunge into most of their extravagances. In consequence of which — notwithstanding occasional supplies from his uncle, and the convenient practice of leaving every town at which they were stationed in debt—he was kept in perpetual embarrassments.

His alliance with Miss Palmer, therefore, appeared a very eligible measure. He had been confidently assured that her father was a man of handsome property, and

this opinion everything he saw at his house and table tended to confirm.

Elizabeth thought this discovery at once released her from all obligation to love, honour, or obey her husband. From that time she conducted herself towards him with coldness and haughtiness, which he bore with tolerable patience until the intelligence of her father's death, and the unexpected state of his affairs, gave him, as he said, "a just right to resent it."

Trained in habits of show and expense, and wholly unaccustomed to economical calculation, Elizabeth made alarming demands upon her husband's limited resources; which, depending upon her promised but delayed portion, he had not thought it necessary to check.

The news of Mr. Palmer's insolvency made an immediate alteration in this respect. Nor did Elizabeth fully comprehend the nature of her misfortune, until the first time that, for want both of money and credit, she was really obliged to deny herself something she wished for. With a strange feeling of impatient astonishment, she then discovered that she must do without what she had said "it was absolutely impossible to do without." A scene of mutual upbraiding between herself and her husband was the consequence of this first lesson in economy, or rather in poverty. But they reproached each other, not for their faults, but their misfortunes—not for being imprudent, but for being poor.

Elizabeth, however, had no sooner despatched her

letter to Stokely, than she felt relieved of her difficulties. She had witnessed so many instances of Mr. Leddenhurst's generosity, that she was confident of receiving the requested supply. And she had not yet learned to look beyond the narrow extent of two hundred pounds.

She was engaged to dine at the colonel's, and had just finished dressing for the occasion, when her husband brought her the expected letter.

"This is fortunate, indeed!" said she: "then, Mr. Robinson, be so good, while I read it, to step over to Levi's, and desire them to send the gold clasps; you may say, you know, I shall call and settle the account to-morrow morning."

They who have ever unfolded a letter, expecting at every turn to behold the fine texture and expressive features of a bank-note which was really wanted, and found it was only a letter, will know better what Elizabeth felt on this occasion, than others who never met with such a circumstance. Having first turned it about in all directions, she sat down and read as follows.

"STOKELY, *September* 28.

"MY DEAR MRS. ROBINSON,

"I should be sorry to forfeit the opinion you are so good as to entertain of my readiness to serve my friends by every means in my power; and shall be happy should I succeed in convincing you that I am sincerely desirous of doing so in the present instance;

although it may not be in the way that appears most expedient to you.

"I should have been greatly at a loss to know how most effectually to serve you, if I had not been favoured with an interview with Lieutenant Robinson's uncle: of whose character I conceive you have formed a mistaken idea. He appears to me to be a man of integrity, good sense, and benevolence; and highly deserving the esteem and confidence of his relations.

"He has undertaken a journey to Broadisham, with the view of explaining to your friends the plan he had suggested to his nephew, in hopes of obtaining their concurrence and influence with you.

"Having himself been unsuccessful in former applications to you and Lieutenant Robinson, he has requested me to address you on the subject; a task which I undertake the more cheerfully, since you have already indulged me with your confidence.

"Mr. Sandford informs me that Lieutenant Robinson was not intended for the military profession, having been trained to business; but entered it very recently, contrary to the advice of his friends. His uncle hoped, however, that after having experienced some of the inconveniences to which he would be exposed from such a change of habits and circumstances, he would more readily listen to proposals for returning to his former pursuits: and had determined, for a time, to urge him no further on the subject. It was not till

he heard of his having formed an alliance, and with so young a lady, ill qualified to brook the difficulties of her situation, that Mr. Sandford became solicitous to prevail with his nephew to abandon his new profession immediately.

"With regard to those expectations you allude to, Mr. Sandford requests me as a friend, my dear madam, to assure you that they must prove wholly fallacious, unless Mr. Robinson founds them on his own diligent exertions. Should he be willing to enter into the prudent views of his uncle, he may depend upon every support and encouragement it is in his power to afford; otherwise he must still submit to those distressing embarrassments, to which the expensive habits so commonly contracted in his profession, and the limited resources it affords, unite to expose him.

"Justice to his other relations, Mr. Sandford directs me to say, must forbid his continuing to answer Mr. Robinson's repeated demands, even if there were a probability of its proving of any ultimate advantage to him; but so far from this, he considers that it would only be a means of encouraging his expensive habits, and, in the end, of plunging him in deeper embarrassments.

"And now, my dear Mrs. Robinson, permit me to assure you, that I am solely influenced by a tender concern for your real welfare, when I earnestly recommend you to use every endeavour to prevail upon Mr. Robinson to accede to his uncle's proposals. I am not

surprised that, at first sight, they should appear to you such as it was absolutely impossible to comply with; and I readily admit that nothing less than an heroic effort can enable you to submit with a good grace to such a change of circumstances. But in making that effort you would find a noble satisfaction; and in descending cheerfully, and gracefully, to an humble sphere, more true independenee and dignity of mind would be exerted, than would probably ever be displayed throughout the whole of a gay life.

"Considering that it might not be agreeable to his nephew to engage in business in his own immediate neighbourhood, Mr. Sandford has been making inquiries in different directions, and has lately met with a very eligible offer from a respectable tradesman retiring from business. The only objection that I know of to the situation is, that it is at the village of Hilsbury, not more than fifteen miles distant from Broadisham: but as it is much secluded, and remote from any of your connexions, perhaps you would not consider that a sufficient reason for declining it. The present proprietor has realized a considerable property in the concern: it being the only one in that line in a populous neighbourhood; and I should conceive a retired situation of this nature would be more agreeable to you than the publicity of a large town.

"Should Mr. Robinson be willing to undertake this concern, his uncle and I will cheerfully unite to advance the

capital; and with regard to the remittance you mention, it shall be forwarded to Chester by the same day's post that informs us of his having agreed to this proposal.

"In case of your concurrence, Mr. Sandford proposes to enter immediately upon the business at Hilsbury, in his nephew's name; where he would see everything properly prepared for your reception, and await your arrival.

"After all, my dear friend, I am aware that no terms can be employed in this affair that will not be harsh and offensive to you; nor will I attempt to represent what might be called the pleasant side of it; for perhaps you have not yet had sufficient experience of the inconveniences of an unsettled life, nor of the miseries of showy poverty, to estimate the value of a peaceful home and a moderate competence.

"I would rather remind you that we are never so safe, nor so truly well off, as when following the obvious directions of Providence. Our affairs are all ordered by Him, who is acquainted not only with our outward circumstances, but most intimate with our hearts; and who knows by what means they will be most effectually subdued, and made willing to accept of real happiness. And be assured, my dear friend, that by whatever circumstances we are taught the nature and value of real religion, and led cordially to embrace it, then, but not till then, we shall find happiness.

"Believe me, your very sincere Friend,

"C. L. LEDDENHURST."

When Lieutenant Robinson returned from his commission to the jeweller's, he found his wife in strong hysterics in her room.

"Mercy upon us! what's the matter?" exclaimed he, stopping in dismay at the door.

"Elizabeth! Betsy! why don't you speak, child! what's the matter, I say?" continued he, advancing towards her.

But Elizabeth took no notice, except motioning with her hand for him to stand further off. Presently a servant came in, saying,—

"If you please, ma'am, here's Mr. Levi, with the gold clasps for you to choose; and here's the bill he bid me to bring up to you."

"I can't look at them now; tell him to call another time," said Elizabeth. "There, Mr. Robinson, read that!" said she, pointing to the letter, and again falling back in her chair.

When he had read it, he walked up and down thoughtfully for some time; at length, going towards his wife, he said, timidly,—

"I'll tell you what, my dear, it's of no use objecting and objecting, we must, I know we must—"

"Must what?" said Elizabeth.

"Must do what Mr. Leddenhurst says, my dear."

"Do exactly as you think proper," cried Elizabeth; "I am not in the least surprised, Mr. Robinson, that *you* are so willing to acquiesce in it; but I never will—do you suppose I ever would submit to be the wife of a tradesman?"

"I'll tell you what, Betsy!" said her husband, flying into a passion, "I can't and I won't submit to this any longer! you didn't bring me a penny, nor a halfpenny, nor a sixpence: and what business have *you*, I should be glad to know, to talk in this unbecoming manner to *me?*"

"O heavens!" cried Elizabeth, "what a barbarian! let me escape!" and rising hastily, she flew down stairs, and throwing herself tragically into the carriage, which had been long waiting for her at the door, gave orders to be taken to Colonel Harrison's.

While she was going there, Elizabeth, notwithstanding her complicated misfortunes, was far from feeling really unhappy. She remembered a great many heroines who had been in debt, and had bad husbands. Young, lovely, distressed, she was flying for protection from his cruelty. Besides, she had fully determined to open her whole heart to her friend Mrs. Harrison; and she was quite certain, that by some means or other, she should be rescued from the threatened degradation.

Elizabeth made her *entrée* at the colonel's with an air of interesting distress. There was nobody then present but the lady of the house, and the major of the regiment, with whom she was particularly intimate.

"My dear creature, how shockingly ill you look!" exclaimed Mrs. Harrison.

"Indeed I am not very well," said she; and throwing herself upon the sofa, she burst into an agony of tears.

While Mrs. Harrison was repeating her inquiries and condolence, the attentive major seated himself beside her, saying, tenderly,—

"My dear Mrs. Robinson, what has happened to distress you? only tell me if there is any possible way in which I can serve you?"

Elizabeth could only reply by smiling on him gratefully through her tears, for other company entered at that moment: but she whispered to Mrs. Harrison, that she would tell her all as soon as they were alone.

After dinner the ladies walked in the garden; when Elizabeth contrived to take her friend aside for a few minutes. She found it, however, an awkward task, notwithstanding the vague and general terms she employed, to disclose those parts of her story which related to her husband's connexions.

"But, my dear child, what an unlucky thing you should ever have liked him!" said Mrs. Harrison. "Upon my word, my dear, I feel quite distressed for you."

"Only tell me what steps I ought to take," said Elizabeth; "I rely entirely on your friendship."

"Indeed, my dear, I should be excessively happy to advise you, and serve you, I'm sure, in any way that lies in my power, in this unpleasant affair; but really it's an awkward thing to interfere between man and wife: indeed, I am not so much surprised that Lieutenant Robinson should consider it altogether the most prudent thing to take the advice of his relations."

"But then, what will become of me?" cried Elizabeth, weeping passionately.

"Come, come, my dear Mrs. Robinson, let me beg of you not to discompose yourself thus," said Mrs. Harrison. "To be sure," continued she, sighing, "we know it is our duty at all times to submit to what the Almighty is pleased to appoint for us. But really I must insist upon it, that you do not distress yourself in this manner; I can't endure to see you so unhappy. Here are all our friends!—for heaven's sake, my dear, dry your tears: shall I send you a glass of anything?"

"Nothing, thank you," said Elizabeth, who felt, at this forlorn moment, the difference between a friend and an acquaintance. The others now joined them; and as her eye wandered from one smiling, selfish face to another—faces from which the unhappy had nothing to hope—she involuntarily thought of Emily and Stokely. The major, however, was a friend nearer at hand; but she saw no more of him during the evening. When she returned at ten o'clock to her comfortless lodgings, she was surprised to find him in earnest conversation with her husband.

The major, who was very good-natured, had frequently accommodated Lieutenant Robinson with small sums of money; which, by this time, had amounted to a debt that he was anxious to have discharged. He had been rather pressing on this subject of late; so that the lieutenant came to the resolution of disclosing

to him the whole state of his affairs, and asking his advice on the present emergency. No sooner did the major understand that by the sale of his commission the lieutenant would be able to pay his debts, than he warmly urged him to do so: and it was not so difficult a matter to persuade him as it would once have been. He began to be weary of his present mode of life, of which the novelty had already worn off; and of the misery of being always in debt, and always short of money. His objections to business were less insurmountable than those of his wife; in his case it was not pride, but idleness that was the obstacle: and he now considered what a difference there would be between being master and man.

"But then there's my wife," said he to the major. "If you had but seen the piece of work we had this morning! Let me beg of you, my dear sir, to try what you can do with her; she will not listen to me, that's certain."

This task the major undertook; and when Elizabeth entered, he addressed her with an air of friendly interest, saying—

"Mrs. Robinson, we have just been talking over this awkward business of yours; and I do assure you very seriously, as I've been telling Robinson, I do not see any other plan in the world, that as a man of honour he could adopt. In fact, if I were in his place, I should not hesitate a single instant about the business; indeed,

for my own part, I should not feel any particular reluctance to—to—engaging in mercantile pursuits—upon my life I shouldn't. If he were a single man," continued the major, observing the gathering gloom in Elizabeth's countenance, "it would be wholly a different affair; but when a man is responsible for the honour and happiness of a young and lovely woman——"

"Oh, do not talk of *my* happiness," cried Elizabeth, glancing expressively at her husband, "that is sacrificed for ever!"

"Heaven forbid!" said the major, looking at his watch.

"So the major's been advising me to lose no time about the business: and he thought I had better write to my uncle and Mr. Leddenhurst by return of post: and so you see, my dear, it's all settled," said Lieutenant Robinson, anxious to make the whole confession before his friend was gone.

"And I am extremely glad that everything is so happily adjusted," said he, rising; and, unwilling to wait the issue either of fainting fits or remonstrances, he took leave.

As the door closed upon the gay, agreeable major, Elizabeth felt herself abandoned to wretchedness. She had no inclination to go into hysterics, nor to remonstrate with her husband; but sat silent and motionless, watching him, while he was sealing and directing the letters:—and now she felt really unhappy.

The loss of rank *is* a misfortune: and Elizabeth felt

its utmost poignancy. She had always indulged that senseless contempt for trade, and trades-people, which is prevalent among the vulgar of her class: and she had not had opportunities of knowing that many of the truly noble—the excellent of the earth—that many persons of superior understandings, even of real taste, and respectable information—are to be found standing behind a country counter.

Having, however, no means of redress, Elizabeth suffered the necessary arrangements for their departure to take place undisturbed. During the few weeks they still remained at Chester, she never allowed herself to take any distinct view of the future: only indulging a kind of vague hope, that anything so insupportable as the condition which threatened her, she should never be actually permitted to endure. And since nothing was now to be hoped from friends, relations, or acquaintances, she began to think that chance, or fate, or Providence, or something, would certainly interfere to prevent it.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING these hopes, the day actually arrived on which Elizabeth and her husband took leave of Chester, and set off for their new home.

For, in this interval, no distant relation had died and left them a fortune; not a single individual in all the

city of Chester had offered to lend them a thousand pounds; no banker, brewer, or merchant, wanted a partner; no fashionable dowager a companion. In short, neither luck nor accident prevented their driving safely into the village of Hilsbury, on the very day they were expected.

ROBINSON, in gold letters, over the door of a smart country shop, pointed out to Elizabeth her future residence.

"Is there no private door?" said she to her new uncle, as he handed her from the fly.

"We have no other door; please to follow me, ma'am, and I'll show you the way," said he, conducting her through the shop, into a light, pleasant parlour. It was in reality far pleasanter than the dark and shabby apartment which Elizabeth used to call her drawing-room, in their lodgings at Chester.

"Welcome to Hilsbury, ma'am!" said the uncle, courteously.

Elizabeth bowed; and returned laconic answers to his repeated good-natured attempts to draw her into conversation.

But Mr. Robinson, who felt more at ease, and more in his element than he had done for two years past, was in high good humour, and very talkative.

"Bless my heart, uncle, what a nice snug little place you've got for us here!" said he, rubbing his hands, and looking round the room.

There were some neat flower-stands, set out with autumn flowers; and a very pretty painted work-table; and various little decorations; at which, however, Elizabeth was rather surprised than pleased, when she observed them.

Every part of the house wore the same appearance of neatness and comfort; and seemed adjusted by a correct taste, careful to prevent an awkward contrast between the shop and the dwelling. It was something more than neat, and yet less than elegant.

Elizabeth, as she was conducted over it, could not help wondering that the old man should have so good a notion of doing things. For he had been strictly forbidden to inform her to whose taste and activity the credit really belonged. She was indebted to Mr. Sandford for the desire of having everything comfortable for her reception, and for the willingness to pay for it: but it was her friend Emily who had done the rest.

Emily, having heard Mr. Sandford expressing a wish that things might be made as agreeable as possible to the young lady, and lamenting his own ignorance of these affairs, earnestly requested permission to accompany him to Hilsbury, to assist in making the requisite preparations; which was agreed to, upon Miss Weston's offering to escort her. And during the time that Elizabeth was waiting at Chester, thinking herself abandoned by all the world, her two friends were busily employed in planning and executing those little contrivances to

make her comfortable, which would not occur to the genius of an upholsterer.

It was not till the morning of the very day on which Elizabeth was expected, that all was in complete readiness. Mr. Leddenhurst's carriage stood at the door to take them home. Miss Weston was quite ready to go: but Emily still lingered, to see if everything was in exact order. She replaced the flowers—then returned to adjust the folds of the window curtains—and stood at the parlour-door, to see how it would strike Elizabeth when she first entered. She next returned to that which was intended to be Elizabeth's room, which was fortunate; for the wind had blown up one corner of the white napkin on the dressing-table. Emily laid it smooth—set the looking-glass in precisely the proper angle—once more patted the volumes on the bookshelves quite even—and after a moment's thought, took down the handsome new Bible which had been provided, and laid it on the dressing-table. She then went down stairs, and having repeated sundry injunctions to Mr. Sandford, sprang nimbly into the carriage, and drove off.

When Elizabeth awoke the next morning, refreshed from the fatigue of her journey, and opened her pleasant window, which looked across the village street upon a fine hilly country, her spirits experienced a momentary revival—a transient glow of comfort, such as will occasionally beam out upon the deepest gloom. But it was

transient: the sight of Mr. Edwards, the shopman, in the street below, taking down the shutters, recalled her to a sense of her misery.

Comfort sounds a dull word to those who are accustomed to live upon enjoyment: to Elizabeth it had few charms. In surveying her new situation, she was rather provoked than pleased, to find that there was anything to render her discontent less reasonable. She had neither philosophy enough to be pleased, nor good nature enough to appear so. Indeed it is nothing less than Christian humility that can make persons willing to be happy in any way that is not of their own choosing.

Old Mr. Sandford's was the only pleasant face that was brought down to breakfast this morning: for poor Frederick Robinson found that the two idle years he had spent in his Majesty's service had not had the smallest tendency to lessen his dislike to useful employment. He sighed heavily, when, as soon as breakfast was over, his uncle, with the promptness of an industrious man, hurried him away to the counting-house: while Elizabeth, who scrupulously avoided engaging in anything that would seem like acquiescing in her fate, shut herself up in her room, and employed herself in unpacking her portmanteaus. When she had done so, in spite of her reluctance, she found it most expedient to put away the things in her new drawers. With a heavy heart she put by the gay dresses and ornaments, which were now useless to her: but it was with a deeper pang that

she laid aside her husband's discarded uniform. She gazed at the faded scarlet and tarnished gold, and secretly felt that this was all she had ever admired in Lieutenant Robinson.

The reserve and coldness with which Elizabeth conducted herself towards Mr. Sandford could not overcome his good nature. He was particularly fond of young people; and longed to express the kindness of a relative; but he was careful not to offend her by unwelcome familiarity. He saw that she was placed in a new and mortifying situation; and while he regarded her with true pity and benevolence, he treated her with such respectful tenderness as would have dispelled the gloom from many a brow.

Emily loved the old man: and he, while witnessing her cheerful, disinterested zeal in the service of her friend, and while receiving from her himself those respectful attentions which she involuntarily paid to age and worth in every station, often wished that his nephew might have made as good a choice.

Mr. Sandford had been so long absent from his own concerns, that he could only remain a few days longer, to introduce his nephew to the business. During this period he observed with some uneasiness the unpromising disposition which both the young people discovered towards their new duties. Elizabeth sat in state all day at her work-table; leaving her domestic affairs to fate and a servant: while Mr. Robinson wished excessively

to be allowed to lounge about in the same gentleman-like idleness he had been lately used to. As to the business, his uncle and Edwards, he thought, were quite sufficient at present: but as soon as his uncle was gone, he declared that he intended to give his whole mind to it—"upon his word and honour he would."

Accustomed to revel at his ease at the luxurious mess, he felt it a particular hardship to have to rise in the midst of dinner to attend a customer.

"Frederick—the bell, Frederick!" his uncle used to say; but he would be so long preparing to go, that his good-natured uncle usually went himself; Frederick contenting himself with pretending to rise, and saying, "Don't you go, sir!"

It was not, therefore, without anxiety, that Mr. Sandford took leave of his niece and nephew. Just before he set off, he called the latter aside, and gave him some good advice, particularly on the subjects of industry and frugality.

"You know, Frederick," said he, "how handsomely Mr. Leddenhurst has come forward: and as for me, I have done more than I ought in justice to your poor sister and your cousins. So that if you get into fresh difficulties, you must look to others to help you out, for I have done my utmost: and, Frederick," added he, in a softer voice, "while we are speaking, let me beg of you to treat poor Mrs. Robinson with as much respect and delicacy as possible. You should consider that

you have brought her into a very different situation to what she was brought up to, and it's natural she should feel it—quite natural. You should consider, too, what a delicate young creature she is, and give her every indulgence that's prudent; and make allowances: a little tenderness and consideration may do a great deal in reconciling her to her circumstances."

To all this, and more, Mr. Robinson continued saying, "Certainly, sir—certainly, sir." As soon as his uncle was gone, for which all the time he had been rather impatient, he ran upstairs to unpack a new violin which he had brought from Chester, but which he had not thought fit to produce during his uncle's stay. He always believed that he had a fine ear for music; and to scrape on this instrument, was one of the accomplishments he had acquired during his life of leisure.

The village of Hilsbury was remarkably secluded in its situation and appearance. It consisted of a single street, hidden amid the solitude of fine, but barren hills; and, with the exception of Mr. Robinson's house, was formed entirely of stone cottages. The business depended upon the custom of the neighbouring farms, and of the poor inhabitants of many little hamlets that were scattered among the hills.

In this solitude Elizabeth's days passed with dreary sameness. She used to sit by her fireside during the dark afternoons of this November, and, watching the

sparks from the blacksmith's shed that was directly opposite the house, muse upon scenes of past happiness. This was her only solace; except, indeed, that she experienced a secret satisfaction from the contrast between herself and her condition. When she surveyed her delicate form, her white hands, her beautiful hair, her dress, though unornamented, still elegant, she felt that she was still a heroine in distress: but it was a satisfaction too slight to be a real alleviation; because there were so few to witness it, and those few so insignificant. And she now discovered—what it required some experience to believe—that it is a far pleasanter thing to be a heroine not in distress.

Elizabeth had been some time in her new abode before she made her appearance in the shop. The first time she did so, it was to procure some articles she wanted herself. "Pray do you sell silk fringe?" she said, in the same tone and manner with which she had been accustomed to make her purchases.

While she was examining the box of fringes, and turning over card after card with her delicate fingers, some ladies from a country house at some miles distance happened to stop at the door in a barouche. Elizabeth took no notice of them as they entered, but continued looking over the fringes, and withdrew as soon as she had found some that suited her. But just as she was quitting the shop, she had the satisfaction of hearing one of them say to Edwards, in a tone of surprise, "Is

that Mrs. Robinson?" Elizabeth was seen reading, very intently, at the parlour window, when the barouche drove past.

There was a green, in the outskirts of the village, where the neighbouring young farmers used to assemble to play at cricket. Mr. Robinson was fond of this diversion; and he soon became one of the most constant attendants there. One day, just as he had snapped to his fiddle-case, and was reaching down his hat to go to this green, Mr. Edwards walked into the counting house.

"I just wish to say, Mr. Robinson," said he, "that I shall be obliged to you to look out for some other person to do your business, sir. It's what I never was used to, and what I can't undertake, to have everything laying upon one pair of hands; and unless you think proper to give me some assistance, Mr. Robinson, the sooner you suit yourself the better, sir."

Much as Mr. Robinson was disturbed at this speech, he could not give up going to the cricket-ground; but he told Mr. Edwards he would take it into consideration; and assured him he should have some help before long He felt, however, very much perplexed and discomfited on this occasion. There were few afflictions he dreaded so much as that of being obliged to exert himself.

As he walked down the street, wishing Edwards would not be so unaccountably lazy, and wondering what he should do, some fine nuts caught his eye, that

were exposed for sale in a cottage window: he bought some—and was comforted. He was very fond of good things in general, and of these in particular; and while he sat on a seat upon the cricket-ground, cracking his nuts, he forgot his troubles; at least, they did not oppress him. There were few of the evils of life, for which an apple, a nut, and especially a good dinner, would not afford him temporary relief. And if this real interest in the sweet and the savoury were peculiar to persons of no higher intellectual pretensions than Mr. Frederick Robinson, it would not be at all unaccountable.

But when both the feast and the sport were over, and he was returning late in the afternoon through the village street, the lights in his shop window brought it again to his remembrance. At supper time he appeared full of thought: Elizabeth never took supper; she was reading the newspaper, at the further end of the room.

"I say, Elizabeth!" said he, all on a sudden, as soon as he had finished supper.

Elizabeth looked up from the newspaper.

"There's one thing that I have been going to speak of ever since we have been here; and it's what I hope you'll not make any piece of work nor opposition about, because it's absolutely indispensably necessary."

"What is it, pray?" said Elizabeth.

"I must say, then," continued he, "that this is the

first business I ever was in, in my life, where the mistress—where the lady, did not use to go in sometimes when she was wanted."

"What do you mean, Mr. Robinson?" said Elizabeth.

"I mean what I say," replied he; "I mean that it is a sin and a shame, to see a woman sitting all day long in her parlour, doing of work and nonsense, when there's a shop full of customers that want to be waited on. Why, there was Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Johnson, and—"

"Gracious goodness!" exclaimed Elizabeth, "this exceeds all—everything! I really did not imagine—I confess I had not the smallest idea that any one—that you, even you, Mr. Robinson, would ever have thought of proposing such a thing!"

"Bless my heart, Betsy! what a fuss about nothing! I say, then, whatever you may think of it, something must be done. There's Edwards this very day been giving of me warning, because he has so much upon his hands, and nobody to help him. As for me, you know very well that I am confined from morning to night to the counting-house, and can't stir: and I see plainly the business is going to ruin—and my uncle will lay all the blame upon me; and all because of your pride and nonsense."

"If there is so much business that one servant is not sufficient, pray why cannot you keep another?" said Elizabeth. "Oh!" added she, falling into a violent fit

of weeping, "when I left my dear, dear father's house, how little I thought of all I was to suffer."

Her husband was always frightened when she went into hysterics, and he thought she was going into hysterics now; besides, he was really good-natured. So he said, "Well, well, child, I tell you what—I'll see if I can't get another man, or boy, or lad, or something. So don't go and flurry yourself into those foolish fits now, for mercy's sake!"

Mr. Robinson, however, dared not venture to take this step, without writing to consult his uncle. And Mr. Sandford, in reply, strongly dissuaded him from any such expensive proceeding: but he added, that in order to afford him some present relief, until he became more accustomed to the business, his sister Rebecca had offered, if he wished it, to come and stay a month or two at Hilsbury, and render them all the assistance in her power. "We can ill spare her," said the good uncle, "but I am willing to do everything in my power to encourage you: and in the meantime, as it must be a few weeks before she can be with you, I shall expect, Frederick, that you make every possible exertion yourself, with regard to business."

This offer Mr. Robinson very joyfully accepted; and Mr. Edwards was prevailed upon to stay, upon the promise of an accomplished assistant in "my sister Becky."

CHAPTER XIV.

But by this time Elizabeth's cheek had grown pale. She was unhappy without *éclat*: there was no one to pity her misfortunes, no one to wonder at her hard lot; and she was deprived of all that had the power to gratify or to excite her. Irritated, impatient, and comfortless, she sank into despondency; and the effect was soon visible in her altered appearance.

After several days of feverish indisposition, she became so ill as to be confined to her room: and there she found herself lonely indeed. Her husband was very sorry to see her so ill, but nursing, he thought, was women's business. He left that to the maid; and she was an unfeeling, selfish woman, who brought up her mistress's ill-made messes with gloomy looks, and frequent murmurings.

It was towards the close of the third day Elizabeth had passed in bed, that as she was lying feverish and comfortless—watching, in the dusk, the light of the blacksmith's shop flashing on the ceiling—she heard the door open gently; so gently, that she was sure it could not be the maid: and in an instant she saw Emily at her bed-side, her countenance glowing with health and cheerfulness; and she said—

"Dear Elizabeth, I heard you were ill, and I have come to nurse you."

Elizabeth started up without speaking a word: and throwing her hot arms around Emily's neck, continued to weep a long time with a plaintive, piteous, weak cry, upon her bosom.

"Dear, dear, Elizabeth!" said Emily.

It was so long since she had heard the accents of kindness, that the soothing tones of Emily's voice quite overwhelmed her.

"I did not think there was any one in the world that cared for me now," she said, at length.

"Oh, you have never been forgotten by your friends," said Emily. "I should have come to see you long before this, if I had been sure you would have liked it. But we will not talk much to-night, dear Elizabeth;—let me try now to make you a little comfortable," said she; and taking off her hat and pelisse, she proceeded quietly to smoothe the tumbled pillow, and restore the littered room to neatness and comfort. She next went to prepare a cooling beverage for the night, into the disorderly kitchen; where the maid and the shopman were carousing over a blazing fire. Elizabeth took readily, and with confidence, what Emily had made for her; said it was "very pleasant;" and soon after she sank into a quiet sleep. Emily sat up with her friend that night; and when she had done all that was requisite for her, she went to the book-shelves to look for some-

thing to read. She took down Elizabeth's morocco Bible; and she sighed to see that it had the appearance of an unused book.

Emily, since they last parted, was improved in her appearance, but still more in her mind: it was now under the settled habitual influence of religion. Her faults, though not extirpated, were subdued; and her once uncertain virtues shone out with the steady light of Christian graces. Her good nature was now charity—her sensibility, benevolence—her modesty, humility—her sprightliness, cheerfulness. Her frequent abstractions from the common affairs of life had in great measure given place to a cheerful performance of its quiet duties, and a ready attention to the wants and interests of others. She had fewer ecstasies, but more happiness.

For several days after Emily's arrival, Elizabeth continued so ill, that little conversation passed between them, except what related to her present wants and sufferings. When she began to amend, the effects of her disorder, and the returning remembrance of her misfortunes, produced a state of irritable fretfulness, which Emily's invariable tenderness was unable to soothe; and she repelled with peevishness, and almost with asperity, every effort to enliven her, or to engage her in conversation. Emily's eyes filled with tears, when she contemplated the alteration that illness and unhappiness had made in the once blooming countenance of

her friend; and she fervently wished and prayed that she might be led to seek for that consolation of which she still appeared to be wholly destitute.

Having once the Bible open in her hand, Emily ventured to say, "Would you like me to read aloud a little while?" But Elizabeth looked up reproachfully, and replied rather fretfully, "No, no, I cannot bear it—pray do not disturb me!" Emily shut the book, and gazed at her with heartfelt pity.

One morning, Elizabeth's spirits revived on finding herself decidedly better; for in spite of other trials, the first feelings of returning health will be feelings of happiness. When Emily came in, she found her disposed, for the first time, to enter into conversation, and to tell her of her troubles: for when people begin suddenly to talk of their misfortunes, it is generally in consequence of some temporary alleviation of their pressure.

"Oh, Emily!" said she, "I have been too ill to talk to you: but you do not know how unhappy I am. You see, indeed, what a situation I am in—*what* a situation! Oh! my happiness is sacrificed—sacrificed for ever!"

"Indeed, I feel for you deeply, dear Elizabeth," said Emily, after hearing her expatiate upon her grievances. "How glad I should be, if I could comfort you!"

"There is no comfort for me, Emily: can there be anything in my circumstances that could possibly afford me the smallest degree of pleasure?"

"Not pleasure, perhaps," replied Emily; "but is it

not possible to be happy—to be contented, at least—without pleasure?"

"Oh, do not take up my words," said Elizabeth; "I really don't understand such nice distinctions. If you will not allow that I have cause to be miserable, it is because you have never known what it is to be unfortunate."

"I know you have much need of patience, and of resignation," said Emily: "but, Elizabeth, I have myself seen instances of people being really happy, who have had, perhaps, as much to endure as you have."

"Yes, I know very well what you mean: but as to religion, it would never, I am confident, make any particular difference to me, if I were to give myself ever so much concern about it. Now you are exactly the kind of person to be very religious; and I am not at all surprised that you view it in that particular kind of way that some people do."

"Indeed, you are mistaken," replied Emily; "so far from being naturally disposed to it, it is impossible you could feel more averse to religion—real religion—than I did, nor more difficulty in it: and I should always have remained as ignorant and as indifferent as I used to be, if God had not given me the desire to seek Him. And He will give it to you, if you ask for it: and then you would be happy; happier, a thousand times, here, in this humble solitude, than all the splendours of the world could make you."

"But even if I were ever so—so devotional, and all that," said Elizabeth, "I am persuaded it would only continue so long as I am deprived of other things; I am certain I should never care particularly about religion, if I had anything else to take pleasure in."

"Yes, if you had once felt the happiness of loving and serving God, you would prefer it to all other pleasures," said Emily.

"It may make some people happy, and it does you, I daresay," replied Elizabeth; "but as for me, I really do not believe it ever would: indeed, I feel a dislike to the thought of the thing; and to confess the truth, I always did, even at the time that I was hearing and seeing so much of it."

"And so did I—and so does everyone," replied Emily; "until a new heart and a right spirit is given: and this is what we must pray for. But oh! do not let us talk of religion as a thing we may choose or refuse like an accomplishment, according to our particular taste: we *must* be religious—we must come to Jesus Christ for salvation, and learn to love God and His service. It is the one thing absolutely needful."

"I do assure you," said Elizabeth, after a short pause, "that sometimes, since I have been in this miserable place, I have wished I were religious; but I know that it is quite impossible."

"Impossible! oh no: it is impossible that such faint wishes should make you so; but with God everything

is possible; and if you sincerely desire, and earnestly ask His help, you will receive it."

"You do not know my heart," said Elizabeth, "it is very different from yours."

"If God had not promised to change the heart, I must have despaired, as well as you; but He will."

"What, *my* heart?" said Elizabeth.

During the latter part of this conversation, there was an appearance of sincerity and solicitude in Elizabeth, that Emily had never observed in her on any former occasion. She did not, however, continue the subject much longer at that time, lest her friend should be wearied; but she was overjoyed to find that for the two or three following days Elizabeth appeared willing, and almost anxious, to renew it.

During this visit, Emily had many opportunities of observing the neglected and declining state of the business. She had even heard Mr. Robinson making some lazy complaints of the discouraging state of his affairs. In writing to her father she had mentioned this, and expressed an earnest wish that some situation could be devised for them that would be less irksome to Elizabeth, and more likely to secure their permanent comfort. Very soon after, she had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Mr. Grey, offering—provided it met with Mr. Robinson's approbation—to use his interest in endeavouring to procure for him the situation, then vacant, of superior clerk in a concern with which he was

remotely connected. The salary, he said, was handsome, and the place considered respectable. An immediate answer was required, and Emily lost no time in submitting the proposal to Mr. Robinson's consideration. Most people, and especially idle people, expect to be bettered by a change of circumstances, and he accepted the offer without hesitation.

Emily found Elizabeth employed in reading the Bible, when she entered her room to communicate the contents of this letter.

"I am sorry to interrupt you," said she, "but there is something"—offering her the letter—"that perhaps will give you a little pleasure."

"My dear girl!" cried Elizabeth, when she had hastily read it, "how shall I ever repay you and your dear, good father for this kindness? Why this is the very thing for Robinson—let me see—what does it say?—'the place considered respectable'—that means genteel, of course: oh, Emily," said she, shutting the Bible, and rising briskly from her chair, "I feel quite well and happy."

"But recollect, it is still very uncertain," said Emily.

"Not *very* uncertain, my dear, surely; your father here speaks confidently, almost, does not he?—'think it not unlikely my application may be successful.'"

"Not unlikely; but he is not at all sure, you see," said Emily. "I am almost sorry I told you now," added

she, as she looked at Elizabeth's animated and eager countenance.

"Dear! it would have been cruel not to have told me," said Elizabeth.

"But if you should be disappointed," resumed Emily, "you would now, I hope, know how to submit, and where to seek consolation."

"Yes, indeed, I hope I should," replied Elizabeth.

"It is the only satisfaction," continued Emily, "to commit such concerns cheerfully to God's care, knowing they will be overruled for our real good; it must, I should think, prevent all distressing anxiety."

"Very true," answered Elizabeth. "Emily," said she, after a short silence, "I wonder what your father means by a 'handsome salary'—have you any idea, my dear, what it would be?"

"No, indeed, I never heard," said Emily, sighing: and she almost regretted that the application had been made.

Nothing was now talked of but the expected appointment; and Emily found, with deep concern, that it was vain to attempt engaging Elizabeth in the conversations which had lately seemed to interest and affect her. She either answered with indifference, or—what was still more painful to Emily, and discouraged her most from attempting it—she adopted her old artificial manner, in talking about religion.

After a week's suspense, a letter arrived from Mr.

Grey, to inform them that his application in behalf of Mr. Robinson had been unsuccessful. Elizabeth was busy at her drawers examining some dresses, which till now had not seen the light since she came to Hilsbury, when Emily, with a heavy heart, entered with her father's letter. She put it into her hand, and withdrew in silence. Mr. Robinson's disappointment was more vociferous, but less acute, than Elizabeth's. In her mind a relish for the world had been aroused too actively to subside again with the hopes that excited it. She was first stunned, then irritated, by the intelligence. She referred again and again to the unwelcome letter, but still the decisive words, "unsuccessful application," left her nothing to hope. She had not learned to acquiesce in adversity, and at first refused to believe that she must actually submit to it. If this plan had failed, something, she thought, might be done; and her mind ranged with impatient ingenuity from scheme to scheme, as each appeared more impracticable than the former: till at last she was compelled to believe, that there was nothing before her but to submit to present circumstances. When, after a long train of thought, she arrived at this conclusion, she again burst into a passionate fit of impatient sorrow.

When Emily joined her, she did not attempt to offer ill-timed reflections; they passed the greatest part of the day in silence; and it was not till Elizabeth had recovered from the surprise of disappointment, that she

began to recollect there was still one way of being happy that was not unattainable.

How many are driven to religion as a last refuge, who would never have chosen it as the first good!

As they were sitting together in the evening, Elizabeth broke a long silence by saying, in a voice between penitence and peevishness, "Is not this exactly what I told you—that I should never care about religion if I had anything besides to take an interest in?—I have scarcely given it a thought the last week, Emily, and now what else is there to comfort me?"

"Oh, Elizabeth! then is not this a fortunate disappointment? be thankful that you were not abandoned to prosperity."

"But now," said Elizabeth, "now that I have been again as unconcerned, and indifferent, and ungrateful as ever, how can I hope to be forgiven?"

"God's ways are not like ours," answered Emily; "His invitations are made to the unconcerned and the ungrateful. But when we have refused to surrender our hearts to Him till they have made trial of every other object, it should make us more humble and more thankful, that He will at last accept such a worthless, ungenerous gift."

The tears were starting in Elizabeth's eyes while Emily was speaking, and when a little more had passed, she thought it best to leave her alone, and silently withdrew. Elizabeth had sometimes said her prayers, but she had

never prayed; and now, for the first time, she felt a real desire to do so. As soon as Emily was gone, she sank down by the bed-side; she wept, but was unable to utter a word; overwhelmed with the strange, glowing feeling of sincerity, and with the new and mighty effort to express a deep, inward sentiment, to a Being invisible, and hitherto wholly unknown. They who do not know that prayer is an effort requiring all the energies of body and mind, may question whether they ever have prayed.

After awhile, she knew not how long, Elizabeth rose up from her knees, exhausted, but yet relieved. When Emily returned, she was struck with an expression of meekness and earnestness in her countenance, that was not natural to it.

"Emily," said she, in a faltering voice, "I have been attempting to—pray, but I cannot."

"Then I believe you have prayed, dear Elizabeth," said Emily. "It is only in real prayer that there is any difficulty: it was easy to say our prayers, as we used to do: but now you feel the difference between that formal service, and calling upon God in spirit and in truth."

To Elizabeth, however, although a desire and a hope had suddenly sprung up in her mind, which gave her a new and strange sense of satisfaction, the difficulties in the way appeared at first insurmountable. Nor was it surprising that, to a person of her character, religion, as it now appeared to her, should seem an almost unattainable good. A single glance at the reality convinced her,

that those things must be sacrificed to it from which she had ever derived her choicest gratifications: the inmost recesses of her heart must yield up their long-secreted idolatries. If "the rich can scarcely be saved," how shall the vain? For who that knows his own heart but must acknowledge, that it were easier to resign his wealth than to mortify his vanity? And surely, if any one principle of our corrupt nature may be considered as more than another directly opposed to the Christian temper, it is that self-seeking and self-display which has human admiration for its object.

CHAPTER XV.

If Elizabeth's religion had expended itself in words and emotions, it would have been, as before, of a very doubtful character. But she soon gave the best evidence of its reality, by her anxiety to bring her daily conduct under its influence. She had, however, much to subdue, and much to learn. She and Emily had many conversations on the subject of her future conduct.

"I believe," said Elizabeth, one evening, "that I could now be happy in a cottage—almost in any situation, especially with a companion I could love; but the business—the trade—I cannot tell you, Emily, how unpleasant it is to me; only I hope I am now

willing—more willing, at least, to submit to what is unpleasant."

"But in time," said Emily, "may not you become almost reconciled even to this? especially if you *could* so far overcome your reluctance as to take an interest in it yourself; and you are so clever, and have so much taste that——"

"Dear! do you think so?" interrupted Elizabeth.

"That I am sure," continued Emily, "Mr. Robinson would soon find an alteration in his affairs if you were once to attend to them."

"But then there's Frederick! Emily, you know I cannot love him."

"Cannot you?" said Emily. "But yet," added she, after a long pause, "I have thought sometimes, you might treat him with a little more respect and—kindness, and then perhaps——"

"I know it—yes, I know I ought; and I will endeavour," said she: and here the conversation ended.

That night Mr. Robinson came in to supper with a gloomy countenance. Everything was going wrong. Business dull—money scarce—Edwards saucy; but what really oppressed him most of all was the weight of his own indolence.

When Elizabeth came down, she had evidently been in tears, but she did not look gloomy; and going towards her husband, she said, "Are you tired to-night?"

"Rather, my dear—not very, though, thank you," said

he, unfolding his arms, and brightening up at the unexpected attention.

While they were at supper, after two or three unsuccessful efforts to speak, Elizabeth at length said, "Mr. Robinson, you spoke to me some time ago about assisting you in the shop; I refused then, but now I have determined to do it; and I intend to begin as soon"—and her voice faltered—"as soon as I am well enough to stand in the cold."

"Dear me! will you?" said her husband, in unfeigned astonishment.

But Elizabeth, overcome by the effort she had made, burst into tears, and could not reply.

"But I would not have you to do it upon any account, if it frets you thus," added he.

"Oh, she is not fretting," said Emily; "she likes it, only——" and here she stopped, at a loss how to make Mr. Robinson comprehend why anybody should cry at what they like.

"I shall be of very little service at first," resumed Elizabeth, in a firmer voice; "but I hope I shall learn in time; and as your sister is coming, and you find Edwards so inattentive and troublesome, I think it would be best to part with him, and we will endeavour to manage the business among ourselves."

"Well, I assure you, I shall be glad enough to get rid of that idle dog; that is, if you really intend it, my dear," said he.

"Yes, I really intend it," said Elizabeth.

And she retired to rest this night, with a calm sense of self-approval that she had seldom known. It was the genuine pleasure with which real self-denial is usually rewarded.

The next day, while they were at dinner, the stage coach, which once a week passed through the village, drove by their window; and Mr. Robinson started up, exclaiming, "There's my sister Becky!" and immediately set off to receive her.

"I wonder what sort of a being she is," said Elizabeth.

"We shall soon see," said Emily.

In a few minutes Mr. Robinson returned, laden with packages, and introduced his sister to the ladies. Elizabeth held out her hand to one of far less delicate texture, and endeavoured to receive her new relation with cordiality; but Miss Rebecca's first appearance was not prepossessing. She was a plain person, much marked with the small-pox, and appeared about forty years of age. Her dress was far from untidy; but it showed a total deficiency of taste. But when she spoke, there was a softness in her voice, and a propriety in her mode of expressing herself, that instantly made a favourable impression.

For a person in Miss Rebecca's circumstances to conduct herself with exact propriety towards such a sister-in-law as Elizabeth would not appear very easy; but she seemed to understand this secret to perfection.

There was a certain independence in her character that made her feel at ease, and enabled her to retain her self-possession on every occasion. Although fully conscious of her own inferiority in many respects, she was not to be overawed by such things as wealth, beauty, or elegance. Her behaviour was uniformly obliging, courteous, and respectful; but it was never servile, even to the grandest carriage customer that ever entered her uncle's shop.

Elizabeth took some pains to check the feeling of contemptuous pity, which the first appearance of her new relation had excited, but she soon found that the effort was quite unnecessary. A person of good nature, sound sense, and consistent piety, and who makes no absurd pretensions, is not so easily despised as people may imagine. Miss Rebecca answered this description; and Elizabeth had not spent many hours in her society, before she found that she absolutely commanded her respect. As they became better acquainted, Elizabeth and Emily were surprised to perceive that she was by no means uneducated or ignorant. This discovery, however, was not made by her introducing the names of all the books, and quoting all the authors she could recollect, on the first day of her arrival, but by the general superiority and intelligence of her conversation. She had been in the habit of reading as much as her engagements would permit, from the honest desire of improving her mind, not with the most remote intention of making her

reading a matter of display. In the course of her life she had waited upon many a well-dressed, supercilious customer, to whom it would have been in her power to have imparted useful information; but she never felt disposed to make an unbecoming advantage of her acquisitions. If her mind was superior to her station, it did not disqualify her for its duties, nor lead her to despise them; for her little stock of knowledge had been turned to the best account: it had made her not vain, but wise—not ridiculous, but respectable.

There was no one who ever had so much influence over Frederick Robinson as his sister. While he was at his uncle's, he was continually embroiled in some dispute with his cousins, or the apprentices, or the servants. A consciousness of his own weakness made him exceedingly tenacious of his rights and privileges, and jealous of his dignity: so that he was always imagining the one invaded, and the other insulted. In these disputes his sister Rebecca was the universal peace-maker: every one was willing to appeal to her; and even Frederick would submit to her decisions.

Since her arrival he had been unusually attentive to business; and the scraping of the violin was rarely heard till the shop was shut up in the evening. Indeed, in three days after she came, everything wore a different aspect. Without bustle or parade, her pervading management had restored order in the counting-house, the shop, and the kitchen. Her attentive and obliging manner to

the customers soon noised abroad; and many who had been offended by the neglect of the master, or the impertinence of the man, began to return.

Elizabeth was not more agreeably disappointed in her sister-in-law, than Miss Rebecca was in her. She listened with tears of joy, while Emily related the change which had recently taken place in her friend's mind: and Emily was rejoiced, when she became acquainted with her character, to commit Elizabeth's yet weak and fluctuating principles to her superintendence. Young as she herself was in the Christian life, she was glad to be relieved from the burden of such responsibility, and to consign it to one on whose experience and judicious management she could so well rely.

When she had done this, Emily took leave of Hilsbury; her heart glowing with joy and gratitude, as she contemplated the unexpected issue of her visit.

Elizabeth, who had dreaded the familiarity of a vulgar relation, was the more touched by the true delicacy of Miss Rebecca's manner towards her. A fair form and delicate complexion—much as one might wish to believe it—are not the invariable indications of a delicate mind; while it often happens that this jewel is concealed within a plain, ungraceful exterior.

When Elizabeth witnessed how much might be effected by activity and management, she was strengthened in her determination to remain no longer a useless incumbrance in her own household; and having made

an ingenuous confession of her ignorance, she requested to be instructed in all the mysteries of domestic economy. Miss Rebecca undertook this task with perfect simplicity. She took great pains in instructing her, without suffering her to feel it a mortification to be taught. Emily had not flattered her, in saying that Elizabeth was clever. Her talents had hitherto been exercised to one unproductive end; but now she felt the pleasure of exerting them usefully and honourably; and she made rapid progress, not only in the attainment of those things of which she might feel ashamed of being ignorant, but also in her knowledge of the business, her ignorance of which was no disgrace.

It required, however, an effort—and an effort of something better than philosophy—on the morning she went in to take her first lesson behind the counter. Still pale from the effects of her recent illness, she appeared wrapped in a large shawl; but as she entered the shop, a deep glow passed over her cheeks. Miss Rebecca did not feel less on this occasion than Elizabeth, but she contrived to be quite engaged at the time with a customer, and did not seem to notice her as she walked round and took her station by her side.

A country girl happened to come in at the same instant, who, addressing herself to Miss Rebecca, said,—

"I want a yard and three quarters of—your servant, Miss," said she, perceiving Elizabeth, and dropping a curtsey.

"What did you want, pray?" said Elizabeth, graciously.

While she was showing the article inquired for, Elizabeth observed that her customer's attention was diverted from that to herself; she was glancing at her and at her dress; and seemed admiring the white hands that were unrolling the ribands, still more than the bright, glossy articles themselves. When Elizabeth had dismissed her first customer, she whispered with a smile to Miss Rebecca, "Really it's not half so disagreeable as I expected!"

Elizabeth's good principles were too recently implanted to have attained the force of habits; and she found a constant reference to them necessary upon every fresh occasion. The exercise of patience, self-denial, forbearance, and humility, was new and difficult. Indeed, had other dispositions, or better education, rendered them of easier attainment, the strength and reality of her piety had been less apparent. It was in no instance more so than in her conduct towards her husband. She was solicitous not only to fulfil her ordinary duties towards him, but to win him to partake of that happiness which she herself enjoyed.

"If religion," she said, "were to do as much for him as it has for me, we might be almost happy together." And it was especially with this view that she endeavoured to subdue the constant propensity she felt to treat him with harshness or indifference.

"That tiresome violin!" said she, one evening, as they caught its distant sound from the counting-house.

"I must say, however," said his sister, "that he does not suffer it to be very troublesome to us; I do not remember ever seeing it brought into the parlour."

"No, I confess he has never done that," said Elizabeth.

"Do you think," she resumed, after a long silence, "do you think he would be pleased if I were sometimes to ask him to play to me?"

"That he would, I am certain," said his sister.

That her resolution might not have time to relax, she went out immediately, and opening the door of the counting-house, said, good-naturedly,—

"Mr. Robinson, you keep it all to yourself; why don't you come and play to us sometimes?"

"Dear me! I am sure I had no idea you would like to hear me play! why, it's what I should like of all things," said he, gathering up the music-books, and proceeding briskly to the parlour.

"What shall I play to you now?" said he, in high good humour; "anything you like, only say."

His sister chose something she thought Elizabeth would prefer; and Elizabeth, pleased with herself, found her spirits enlivened even by her husband's bad fiddling; and the evening passed more cheerfully than usual.

Accustomed to be despised, and to be thwarted, he was always particularly gratified by any mark of atten-

tion or compliance; and a little kindness and consideration produced the happiest effects upon his temper. It was in this way that his sister recommended Elizabeth to attempt to acquire an influence over him. He had always been proud of his wife, and would have loved her, after his manner, if she would have permitted it; and now that her conduct towards him was so much altered, he began to be "very fond of her indeed."

Miss Rebecca did not offer to leave Hilsbury till she had the satisfaction of seeing her brother's affairs in a very different state to that in which she had found them. The business was increasing; he himself appeared disposed to take some interest in it; and as for Elizabeth, she was become both willing and able to superintend and conduct their concerns.

But she had derived still more important advantages from her sister's society; she had led Elizabeth on step by step, as she was able to bear it, till she saw her making real progress both in the knowledge and practice of religion.

Having thus spent three useful months with them, she was at length obliged to take leave. They parted with mutual affection and regret: and Elizabeth was left alone to manage her house, her business, her husband, and—herself.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE morning, in the spring, a carriage stopped at Mr. Robinson's door. Emily was the first who sprang out of it: and she was followed by the whole party from Stokely.

Elizabeth coloured high as she advanced from behind the counter to receive them. But their easy, affectionate salutation quickly relieved her embarrassment. She led the way to her little parlour. Mr. Leddenhurst, as he followed her, looked neither to the right hand nor the left, but steered his way through the piles of goods that stood in the shop, and stooped beneath the festoons of drapery that decorated the passage door, as though he saw them not.

As this narrative is so near its conclusion, it may be imagined that the Leddenhursts were come to announce to Elizabeth some sudden change of fortune; or, perhaps, to make her a present of one:—but no; they were only come for the pleasure of seeing her—for the pleasure of seeing Elizabeth happy in obscurity.

They were affected by the striking alteration in her whole appearance since they last met. She was simple in her dress—almost artless in her manner—and the once restless and ambitious turn of her countenance was

succeeded by a subdued and tranquil expression. As Miss Weston sat gazing on her, her eyes filled with tears, in spite of her efforts to restrain them. The good opinion Elizabeth had once so unsuccessfully practised to win, was now spontaneously yielded. She had never in former times received such gratifying expressions of their regard. It was not, as she had dreaded, the affability of condescension to her reduced station, but the open, cordial tribute of friendship and esteem.

The visit was prolonged to several hours, and they had much conversation with Elizabeth; who, when the first feeling of constraint had worn off, spoke of herself, and her situation without reserve. This afforded them an opportunity of observing more minutely the real change that had taken place in her character. Their expectations were not disappointed because they had not been raised unreasonably high. They did not expect to find propensities and habits of twenty years' growth completely extirpated in the course of a few months, even under the influence of the most powerful of all principles.

In Elizabeth's present retirement there was, indeed, little temptation or opportunity for *display*, if that word be understood in its commonest import; but there is no retirement, except that of the grave, where the infirmities of human nature may not find opportunity to exhibit themselves. Pride is rather provoked than checked by

degradation: and never was vanity cheated into humility by being placed in the shade. Elizabeth still found that no duty she had to perform was so difficult as to watch, detect, and subdue it; especially in the new and more subtle forms in which it now frequently assailed her. But it was no longer, as before, a studied and cherished indulgence: religion had taught her to lament it as a sin, and to resist it as an enemy.

Her friends found her even more reconciled to her condition than they had hoped. Time had worn off the edge of mortification. She was no longer surprised, or shocked, to find herself where, and what she was. She took an interest in her employments; and was alive to the honest pleasure of successful management. Besides, she was occupied: and the busy cannot, if they would, be as discontented as the idle. Employment, that second grand secret of happiness, had contributed more than anything, except the first, to reconcile her to her circumstances.

During their visit, Elizabeth took her friends over her neat, orderly house: and into her pretty retired garden, which was now looking gay with spring flowers.

"You would be surprised," said she, "to see how many little pleasures I have now; and that from things which I never took any real pleasure in before. I am not so selfish—so engrossed in——" but here she checked herself, and began to speak of something else. Talking of herself, she observed, was particularly hazardous;

and she found it a good rule never to do so—not even to speak of her faults unless it was unavoidable.

While Mr. Leddenhurst and Mr. Robinson were gone aside to transact some business, Elizabeth and her friends conversed still more unreservedly.

"I assure you," said she, looking on the carpet, "I am happier in all respects than I ever expected to be;—Mr. Robinson is really much more—much less—much improved. Dear Emily," she added, "I often, very often, think of that dreary, feverish night, when you came to nurse and comfort me: from that I date all my happiness!"

"Let us rather both think," said Emily, "of that happy day that brought our friends to Stokely; it is to them we both owe everything that is good."

"We can all now," said Miss Weston, "look back to the time when we were unacquainted with God, and with our own hearts; and to whatever circumstances we may trace the change, let us acknowledge Him as the sole and gracious Author of it."

"And now, sir," said Mr. Leddenhurst, when they returned to the ladies, "we hope to prevail upon you to part with Mrs. Robinson, before long, to pay us a visit at Stokely."

"To be sure I will," replied he, "with a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Leddenhurst; she deserves a little recreation now, as well as any woman in the world; and I'll be bound to say, that there's no place whatever

where it would give Mrs. Robinson so much pleasure to pay a visit to."

"It would, indeed, give me a great deal of pleasure," said Elizabeth; "I have nowhere such kind friends; I should like, too, to visit Broadisham once again; if it were only to think of all that has passed since I last drove out of it."

"Ah, that was on our wedding day!" said her husband.

"Then you will come, my dear," said Mrs. Leddenhurst.

"Yes, she has promised," said Emily.

Her friends now took an affectionate leave of Elizabeth. Before the carriage drove off, they all looked out at her as she stood by her husband's side at the shop-door. There was a tear in her eye, but she strove to conceal it; and her countenance shone with content.

"This is a sight," said Mr. Leddenhurst, "worth coming more than fifteen miles to see:—the subjugation of a propensity that I had almost thought incurable; and I believe that nothing but religion will cure the love of—DISPLAY."

RECREATION.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

—We took our work, and went, you see,
To take an early cup of tea.
We did so now and then, to pay
The friendly debt, and so did they.
Not that our friendship burnt so bright
That all the world could see the light;
'Twas of the ordinary *genus*,
And little love was lost between us:
We loved, I think, about as true
As such near neighbours mostly do.

At first, we all were somewhat dry;
Mamma felt cold, and so did I:
Indeed, that room, sit where you will,
Has draught enough to turn a mill.
"I hope you're warm," says Mrs. G.
"O, quite so," says mamma, *says she;*
"I'll take my shawl off by and by."—
"This room is always warm," *says I.*

At last the tea came up, and so,
With that, our tongues began to go.
Now, in that house, you're sure of knowing
The smallest scrap of news that's going;
We find it *there* the wisest way
To take some care of what we say.

—Says she, "There's dreadful doings still
In that affair about the *will;*
For now the folks in Brewer's Street
Don't speak to *James's*, when they meet.
Poor Mrs. *Sam* sits all alone,
And frets herself to skin and bone.
For months she managed, she declares,
All the old gentleman's affairs;
And always let him have his way,
And never left him night nor day;
Waited and watch'd his every look,
And gave him every drop he took.
Dear Mrs. *Sam*, it was too bad!
He might have left her all he had."

"Pray, ma'am," says I, "has poor Miss A.
Been left as *handsome* as they say?"
"My dear," says she, "'tis no such thing,
She'd nothing but a mourning ring.
But is it not *uncommon* mean
To wear that rusty bombazeen!"

"She had," says I, "the very same
Three years ago, for—what's his name?"
"The Duke of *Brunswick*,—very true,
And has not bought a thread of new,
I'm positive," said Mrs. G.
So then we laugh'd, and drank our tea.

"So," says mamma, "I find it's true
What Captain P. intends to do;
To hire that house, or else to buy—"
"Close to the tanyard, ma'am," says I;
"Upon my word it's very strange,
I wish they mayn't repent the change!"
"My dear," says she, "'tis very well
You know, if *they* can bear the smell."

"Miss F.," says I, "is said to be
A sweet young woman, is not she?"
"O, excellent! I hear," she cried;
"O, truly so!" mamma replied.
"How old should you suppose her, pray?
She's older than she looks, they say."
"Really," says I, "she seems to me
Not more than twenty-two or three."
"O, then you're wrong," says Mrs. G.;
"Their upper servant told our *Jane*,
She'll not see twenty-nine again."
"Indeed, so old! I wonder why

She does not marry, then," says I;
"So many thousands to bestow,
And such a beauty, too, you know."
"A beauty! O, my dear, Miss B.,
You must be joking now," says she;
"Her *figure's* rather pretty,"—"Ah!
That's what *I* say," replied mamma.

"Miss F.," says I, "I've understood,
Spends all her time in doing good:
The people say her coming down
Is quite a blessing to the town."
At that our hostess fetch'd a sigh,
And shook her head; and so, says I,
"It's very kind of her, I'm sure,
To be so generous to the poor."
"No doubt," says she, "'tis very true;
Perhaps there may be *reasons* too:—
You know some people like to pass
For *patrons* with the lower class."

And here I break my story's thread,
Just to remark, that what she said,
Although I took the other part,
Went like a cordial to my heart.

Some innuendos more had pass'd,
Till out the scandal came at last.
"Come then, I'll tell you something more,"

Says she,—" Eliza, shut the door.—
I would not trust a creature here,
For all the world, but you, my dear.
Perhaps it's false—I wish it may,
—But let it go no further pray!"
"O," says mamma, "You need not fear,
We never mention what we hear,"
And so, we drew our chairs the nearer,
And whispering, lest the child should hear her,
She told a tale, at least too long
To be repeated in a song;
We, panting every breath between
With curiosity and spleen.
And how we did enjoy the sport!
And echo every faint report,
And answer every candid doubt,
And turn her motives inside out,
And holes in all her virtues pick,
Till we were sated, almost sick.

—Thus having brought it to a close,
In great good-humour, we arose.
Indeed, 'twas more than time to go,
Our boy had been an hour below.
So, warmly pressing Mrs. G.
To fix a day to come to tea,
We muffled up in cloak and plaid,
And trotted home behind the lad.

THE DISCONTENTED PENDULUM.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

An old clock that had stood for fifty years in a farmer's kitchen without giving its owner any cause of complaint, early one summer's morning, before the family was stirring, suddenly stopped.

Upon this, the dial-plate (if we may credit the fable) changed countenance with alarm: the hands made an ineffectual effort to continue their course; the wheels remained motionless with surprise; the weights hung speechless; each member felt disposed to lay the blame on the others. At length the dial instituted a formal inquiry as to the cause of the stagnation; when hands, wheels, weights, with one voice, protested their innocence. But now a faint tick was heard below, from the pendulum, who thus spoke :—

"I confess myself to be the sole cause of the present stoppage; and am willing, for the general satisfaction, to assign my reasons. The truth is, that I am tired of ticking." Upon hearing this, the old clock became so enraged that it was on the point of *striking.*

"Lazy wire!" exclaimed the dial-plate, holding up its hands.

"Very good!" replied the pendulum, "it is vastly easy for you, Mistress Dial, who have always, as everybody knows, set yourself up above me—it is vastly easy for you, I say, to accuse other people of laziness! You, who have had nothing to do all the days of your life but to stare people in the face, and to amuse yourself with watching all that goes on in the kitchen! Think, I beseech you, how you would like to be shut up for life in this dark closet, and wag backwards and forwards, year after year, as I do."

"As to that," said the dial, "is there not a window in your house on purpose for you to look through?"

"For all that," resumed the pendulum, "it is very dark here; and although there is a window, I dare not stop, even for an instant, to look out. Besides, I am really weary of my way of life; and, if you please, I'll tell you how I took this disgust at my employment. This morning I happened to be calculating how many times I should have to tick in the course only of the next twenty-four hours: perhaps some of you above there can give the exact sum."

The minute hand, being *quick at figures*, instantly replied, "Eighty-six thousand, four hundred times."

"Exactly so," replied the pendulum: "well, I appeal to you all, if the thought of this was not enough to

fatigue one? and when I began to multiply the strokes of one day by those of months and years, really it is no wonder if I felt discouraged at the prospect: so, after a great deal of reasoning and hesitation, thinks I to myself —I'll stop."

The dial could scarcely keep its countenance during this harangue; but, resuming its gravity, thus replied:—

"Dear Mr. Pendulum, I am really astonished that such a useful, industrious person as yourself should have been overcome by this sudden suggestion. It is true you have done a great deal of work in your time. So we have all, and are likely to do; and, although this may fatigue us to *think* of, the question is, whether it will fatigue us to *do:* would you now do me the favour to give about half a dozen strokes to illustrate my argument?"

The pendulum complied, and ticked six times at its usual pace:—"Now," resumed the dial, "may I be allowed to inquire if that exertion was at all fatiguing or disagreeable to you?"

"Not in the least," replied the pendulum:—"it is not of six strokes that I complain, nor of sixty, but of *millions.*

"Very good," replied the dial, "but recollect that, although you may *think* of a million strokes in an instant, you are required to *execute* but one; and that however often you may hereafter have to swing, a moment will always be given you to swing in."

"That consideration staggers me, I confess," said the pendulum.

"Then I hope," resumed the dial-plate, "we shall all immediately return to our duty; for the maids will lie in bed till noon if we stand idling thus."

Upon this the weights, who had never been accused of *light* conduct, used all their influence in urging him to proceed: when, as with one consent, the wheels began to turn, the hands began to move, the pendulum began to wag, and, to its credit, ticked as loud as ever; while a beam of the rising sun that streamed through a hole in the kitchen shutter, shining full upon the dial-plate, it brightened up as if nothing had been the matter.

When the farmer came down to breakfast that morning, upon looking at the clock, he declared that his watch had gained half an hour in the night.

MORAL.

It is said by a celebrated modern writer, "Take care of the minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves." This is an admirable hint, and might be very seasonably recollected when we begin to be "weary in well-doing," from the thought of having a great deal to do. The present is all we have to manage: the past is irrecoverable; the future is uncertain; nor is it fair to burden one moment with the weight of the next. Suffi-

cient unto the moment is the trouble thereof. If we had to walk a hundred miles, we still need set but one step at a time, and this process continued would infallibly bring us to our journey's end. Fatigue generally begins, and is always increased by calculating in a minute the exertion of hours.

Thus, in looking forward to future life let us recollect that we have not to sustain all its toil, to endure all its sufferings, or to encounter all its crosses at once. One moment comes laden with its own little burden, then flies, and is succeeded by another no heavier than the last; if one could be sustained, so can another, and another.

Even in looking forward to a single day the spirit may sometimes faint from an anticipation of the duties, the labours, the trials to temper and patience that may be expected. Now this is unjustly laying the burthen of many thousand moments upon *one*. Let any one resolve to do right *now*, leaving *then* to do as it can, and if he were to live to the age of Methuselah, he would never err. But the common error is to resolve to act right *to-morrow*, or *next time*, but *now*, just *this* once, we must go on the same as ever.

It seems easier to do right to-morrow than to-day, merely because we forget that when to-morrow comes, *then* will be *now*. Thus life passes, with many, in resolutions for the future which the present never fulfils.

It is not thus with those who, "by patient continuance

in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality:" —day by day, minute by minute, they execute the appointed task to which the requisite measure of time and strength is proportioned; and thus, having worked while it was called day, they at length rest from their labours, and "their works follow them."

Let us then, "whatever our hands find to do, do it with all our might, recollecting that *now* is the proper and the accepted time."

THE TOLLING BELL;

A VILLAGE TRADITION.

BY JEFFERYS TAYLOR.

Now stir the fire—the candles snuff,
And pray be sure they're long enough
To last whilst I a tale recite,
Which scarce would please without a light,
If you, like those of whom I tell,
Would fear a midnight tolling bell.

A certain lowly village spire,
Such as the poets most admire,
Stood bosomed in a wooded glen,
Remote from noise or feet of men;
Save when at times each oaken pew
Received within the accustomed few;
Or when the wedding train drew near,
Or now the slowly moving bier.
The churchyard lay beneath the shade
Of trees that solemn darkness made;
So tall the trees—so deep the gloom,

A ray scarce wander'd to the tomb.
Each hillock green, and mouldering stone,
With strong high grass was overgrown;
On which, regardless of the dead,
A cottage cow reposed and fed.

Hard by, there had long empty stood
A large old house, of brick and wood;
Its form I could not well declare,—
'Twas neither oblong, round, nor square;
In front, five windows, grim and tall—
The casements form'd in diamonds small;
Three ancient peaks low nodded o'er
An aged porch, which nodded more;
Within whose partly sheltered space,
Grass, weeds, and reptiles found a place.
Two ill-matched peaks looked down the lane,
Three viewed the venerable fane;
Behind, a gable, seen from far,
Whence flew the owl, when shone the star.

Such was the house, whose age and style
Seemed suited to the neighbouring pile.
On its high chimneys, long unsmoked,
The raven flapped his wing and croaked;
The bat, by winding ways admitted,
Long round each still apartment flitted;
Where many an uninvited guest,

Of varied form, found quiet rest.
The spider, free from all aggression,
Of the same space still kept possession;
The door ajar, that had been left,
Was firm to him as mountain's cleft;—
Robin, affrighted from the hedge,
Perched safely on its dusty edge;
Whilst twittering sparrows, clamorous rooks,
Thronged chimneys, eaves, and hidden nooks.
Within these long-closed rooms, 'twas said,
Oft walked the spectres of the dead;
And further, if my verse be right,
From thence were heard strange sounds at night—
Oft as the pane a transient gleam
Reflected from the lunar beam;
Or blasts, that roared along the dale,
Here prisoned, moaned with piteous wail.
"And who lived there, in days of yore?"
Their tomb must tell;—we know no more.—

"Beneath this stone, lie bodies twain—
Giles Deighton, and his helpmate Jane:—
He, first, did quit this mortal state,
But tarried three-score years and eight:
His wife mourned fifteen years, and then
She died;—her age, three-score and ten:
They lived in Deighton Hall, close by;
Yea, there they lived, and here they lie."

But to proceed :—the adjacent tower
Of late sent forth, at midnight hour,
Dull, deep-toned knells—no sexton there—
Wide spreading through the moveless air,
O'er many a hill and vale around,
Far distant hamlets gained the sound.
Long hovering o'er the village lone,
Down many a chimney sunk the moan ;
Struck fearful souls with thrilling pain,—
" Hark ! there's the bell !—it tolls again."
It tolled in truth ;—no fraud was here ;
No wind—no singing in the ear ;
Clearly and oft, as hosts can tell,
At midnight tolled St. Michael's bell !
At eve, when friends their neighbours saw,
This tale went round :—some dropped the jaw ;
Some laughed—turned pale—the embers stirred,
And vowed they'd not believe a word.
One night themselves would make a search,
Would listen, watch, sit in the church ;
But 'twas such nonsense ;—thus one spoke,
When thrice was dealt the awful stroke !
Three sullen tolls came o'er the ear :
All trembled now with sudden fear—
" There ! there ! Oh dear ! what shall we do ?"
Some one must die !—I wonder who ? "

One day, a stranger, queer and tall,

Whom Captain Doughty I shall call,
Seeking a house, in ancient mode,
Saw that we've mentioned, from the road;
And turning down the lane to view it,
His own long legs soon brought him to it.
Then round it Captain Doughty walked,
Up to the long closed door he stalked;
'Twas fastened still; nor yet decayed;—
Once more a circuit round he made:
Thought he, "I like the place in truth,
In such an one I spent my youth;
In such an one I'd spend my age:—
This may be had I dare engage."
Then back he hastened to the inn;
His host, he marvelled where he'd been:—
Said Captain Doughty, "Landlord, halt!—
My dinner's cold; but I'm in fault.
Who owns that empty house, one sees
Hard by the church, amongst the trees?
I happened, as I passed, to spy it—
I've half a mind to hire or buy it."

The landlord raised his bushy brow,
Then shrugged his shoulders, both I trow,—
"You buy that house, sir!—yes, you may,
And little cash for that will pay;
For there's no soul that could be found,

If you should hunt for five miles round,
Would live within that house or near—
No—not for fifty pounds a year!
And if you there should spend one night,
Sure as you're born, you'll die with fright.

"Mine host," said Doughty, "surely not!
I fear not swords, nor cannon shot.
What can be there, with fright to fill me?
Will bats, and owls, and darkness kill me?"

Now spoke the dame, with lengthened face,
Told all the mysteries of the place,
The sights, the sounds, the tolling bell!
That dire, indisputable knell.

Then Doughty, he toss'd up his chin,
Laughed, roared, and made a mighty din;
Said he, "I'm sorry 'tis no worse,
'Twould be the better for my purse."
He dining then, with wondrous speed,
Discharged his bill, bespoke his steed;
Found who did now the mansion own,—
A cross old man that lived alone,
Far off; none knew exactly where;
But Doughty quickly trotted there—
Found the old churl, his nightcap on,
The business named he came upon;

Enquired the terms for house and grounds,
And bought the whole for fifty pounds!
Next day, he hastened down the lane,
Two old domestics in his train,
Who viewed this new old habitation
With many a doleful exclamation;
Which Doughty heard, but heeded not,
They long submission had been taught;
And as the sturdy door gave way,
He entered in, and so did they.

Now fuss and bustle, noise and pother,
Bats, birds, and insects chased each other,
In haste to gain some safe retreat,
From sticks and brooms, and grinding feet:
And fast they sped—within three days
They all were sent their various ways.
At length, the needful toil was ended,
The house was cleared—the walls were mended:—
The goods arrived—old fashioned chattels;
Athwart the hall the lumber rattles:
Needs-must drives up the twisting stairs,
Broad chests of drawers, and high-backed chairs.
The sundry things they soon arrange,
In divers rooms, and closets strange;
For all find corners, nooks, or shelves,—
At last find places for themselves.

Old Walter and his wife retired
Betimes; their labour rest required:
Then Doughty sought his dusky room,
His taper but revealed the gloom,
The distant bed he scarce could see;
The wind it whistled—so did he.
And what ensued that awful night?—
They lay and slept till it was light!
Not so the next. The hour was two;—
Doughty reposed as others do,
Breathed nasal tunes as heretofore,
When Walter thundered at his door:—
"Master, get up!—my wife's in fits,
And I'm near scared out of my wits!"
But Doughty, heedless, yet lay quiet,
And dreamed what suited with the riot,
Thought that a hogsty, strongly guarded,
By Turkish cannon was bombarded;
When lo! his door burst open wide,
And Walter sprang to his bedside,
Panting and wild, like baited bull,
Gave his lord's arm a mighty pull;
Who doubtful of a just occasion,
Sternly required an explanation.

Scarce could the man his story tell,
Ere thrice, and loudly, tolled the bell!

"There, master! there!—now am I right?
—Here I'll not stop another night!"
Then Walter sunk upon the bed;
Now Bridget to the chamber sped,
(Terror revived her, I suppose,
Instead of hartshorn to her nose.)
Doughty called up what mirth he had,
Though he was neither pleased nor glad;
Said he, "Whoe'er 'tis holds the rope,
Whether the sexton or the pope,
Against his own death he doth pull it,
For through his brains I'll send a bullet."
—Thought Walter, "'Tis a bootless boast,
How can a mortal shoot a ghost!"
—He might have had this thought as well,—
How can a goblin toll a bell!
But he for thoughts had little leisure,
His master now made known his pleasure.
"You, Bridget—hasten to the hall,
Two lanterns take, one great, one small,
Within each place a piece of candle,
Not tall enough to heat the handle;
Yet long enough to hold ignition,
Whilst I make careful inquisition.—
You, Walter, do your duty thus,
Bring my old sword and blunderbuss,
Ramrod and ball; likewise some powder,
To aid the noise, and make it louder;

Bring hat and boots, great coat and stick;
—Do as I say, sir—haste, be quick!
—Halt!—don't depart till I am ready;
Remain with me, five minutes;" said he.

Now to the door they both repair,
Find a low figure standing there!
'Twas Bridget lingering—chicken-hearted,
She had not thence one step departed;
And now with fearful steps descended,
Though Doughty and her spouse attended.
Then, fearful what they there might see,
In the wide hall arrived the three;
The chamber rushlight's feeble ray
Ill lighted parts that distant lay.
Said Bridget—"Master—La! what's that?"
"My coat," said Doughty, "and my hat:"
"Bless me!—it looked as like a man,"
Said Doughty, "as his garments can!"
Then did our hero, tall and thin,
Button this garment to his chin,
And o'er it, as the night was chill,
Drew on a great coat, larger still;
And placed o'er all a hat, you see,
Whose shape told all men, that was *he*.

Now, little but his lengthy nose
Was seen of Doughty through his clothes;

—'Twas well—for whether 'twas with fright,
I tell not—but his face was white;
His mouth, ill shaped to force a smile,
Now formed an arch in Gothic style;
His furrowed brow new wrinkles wore,—
He seemed more aged than before;
And as once more the bell was tolled,
Whilst Bridget screamed, his blood ran cold.
But Doughty now an effort made;
Sore loth was he to seem afraid:
Said he, "Come!—I'll not tarry here,—
Who pulls that bell has most to fear."
Then weapons dire to him were brought,
A sword that had in battle fought,
Gunpowder, blunderbuss, and shot,
The lanterns, and I know not what;
As if his aid he meant to render,
To take Guy Fawkes, or the Pretender.

Thus armed, he hastened to the door;—
Thought Bridget, "He'll come back no more!"
Now Walter drew the bolts aside,
At last the portal opened wide;
Then issued our brave hero forth:
Cold was the air, the wind was north;
The sky was starless as the ground;
All still and dark; no sight, no sound.
Soon as the corner round he turned,

The tall pale tombstones he discerned;
Dimly illumined by the ray,
Which guided now his winding way,
Midst hillocks, tombs, and prostrate stones,
All nameless as the buried bones.

And now as he drew near the fane,
Light sparkled in the Gothic pane!
Our hero made a sudden pause,—
Then found his *lanterns* were the cause.
A long-drawn sigh passed o'er his ear—
He thought some shadowy form was near,
Which seemed to tell the listening air,
Of him who strangely wandered there!
—'Twas nothing but a lingering breeze
That sighed amongst the ancient trees.

Then through the ivied window he
Looked long; but no one could he see;
Within, no congregation staid,
But those beneath the marble laid,
Who slept their quiet sleep below,
As still, a hundred years ago.

Now, noiseless as the silent hour,
Our hero sought the lonely tower,
Whence lately, as he knew full well,
Proceeded that mysterious knell;—

When yonder, at the belfry's side,
A dusky figure he espied!
Now Doughty summoned all his might,
Arranged his weapons, trimmed his light;
And bawling then, with wondrous pains,
Said, "Speak! or I'll blow out your brains!"
Then rose a shape from off the ground,
Which sent a heavy breathing sound,
That seemed to mourn some woful doom,
Then partly sunk behind a tomb.
Said Doughty, "Thou'rt some surly fellow;
Thou wilt not speak, but thou shalt bellow."
—Resolving then his arms to try,
He raised his blunderbuss on high,
And aimed it at the distant figure;
His finger touched the fatal trigger,
When "Halt!" thought he, "before I pull it,
I think I'll e'en extract the bullet,
Lest for his life, mine be required."
—Then Doughty raised his piece, and fired:—
'Twas done! the figure was revealed,
Forth rushing then, no more concealed,
Whose flight increased the mystery now;
—This midnight sexton was—*a cow!*

The case was this: "Here, as we said,
A cow at times reposed and fed;
A cottage cow, whose owner's need

Afforded her no spreading mead,
But far up shady lanes by day
This well-known brindle used to stray;
But when at eve 'twas dusk and late,
Her master oped the church-yard gate;
Who knew, that hidden by the dark,
She'd not be noticed by the clerk.
Now he to whom the duty fell,
To toll or chime this parish bell,
Had thought 'twas dull to stand an hour,
Ding-donging in that darksome tower,
Ill lighted by one cranny small,
A loop-hole in the steeple wall;
He therefore put the long rope through it,
Then used to stand outside and do it:
Thus in fine days this clever wight
Performed his task midst air and light;
And when the bell he ceased to sound,
He left the rope's end on the ground.
Now thereabouts, the cow well knew,
The most refreshing herbage grew;
And though a lantern she had not,
In darkest night she found the spot.
Here as she cropped the tender sward,
Sometimes she pulled the sexton's cord;
—An uncouth mouthful, which, 'twas plain,
Must be *cow-mumble*, or *cow-bane*;*

* Herbs.

When awful! shocking! strange to tell,
Oft as she pulled, she tolled the bell!
—Whether dismay, or unconcern,
Most filled her then, we've failed to learn.

When Doughty this dark corner gained,
The whole was instantly explained.
With comic countenance he viewed
The rope's tough end so lately chewed;
—Pulled it himself with timid force,
And tolled the bell himself, of course;
A confirmation clear, 'twas true,
But somewhat unexpected too.
Then Doughty drew his sword amain,
And cut this direful rope in twain,
With self-congratulation filled,
As if he had the Python killed.
With this, the trophy of the night,
Homeward he sped with all his might,
The which to Walter and to Bridget
He showed, to calm each fear and fidget;
And saving just his fear and dread,
Told all that has been sung or said.

A tolling bell, I freely own,
At midnight heard—the cause unknown,

Would be but an unpleasant tune,
To those who are not frightened soon;
Would cause surprise, perhaps alarm;
Although the sound might mean no harm:
—More fearful far; though day the season,
To hear it toll, and know the reason.

TEMPER; OR, THE TWO OLD LADIES.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

In a huge old-fashioned red brick house, with a great many tall narrow windows in front, and a high flight of stone steps up to the door, lived two old ladies, commonly called Mrs. Abigail and Mrs. Dorothy. They had lived there for many and many a year; they never altered the fashion of their dress, and were very exact and regular in all their habits and customs. Every day of the week they were driven out at the same hour, in their old-fashioned coach, by their old-fashioned coachman, and at the same hour they returned home; so that when the coach passed through the town, either going or returning, everybody knew what was o'clock. They neither paid visits nor received company at their house; and the few servants they kept had lived with them so many years, that none but the aged people of the place could remember the least alteration in the household.

The old ladies dressed exactly alike, and were nearly of the same age; their customs, also, were quite similar; so that to observe them at a distance, it might be sup-

posed there was scarcely any difference between them: and yet there was a difference. Mrs. Abigail was very rich, though nobody knew how rich: but not so Mrs. Dorothy, although she was her own sister; for having in her youth in some way displeased the old gentleman, her father, he left all his fortune to his eldest daughter; so that Mrs. Dorothy depended almost entirely upon the bounty—or rather upon the justice of her sister. But this was not the greatest difference between them; for Mrs. Abigail was ill-natured; and Mrs. Dorothy was good-natured; and it is this kind of thing that makes the greatest real difference between persons, in the mind of all those with whom they have to do. The consequence of this, in the present instance, was, that all the old servants loved Mrs. Dorothy better than they loved their mistress; and waited upon her, not only with more affection, but with more respect. And as respect and affection are things which can neither be concealed where they are felt, nor successfully imitated where they are not, Mrs. Abigail saw as plainly how it was, as if they had told her so in the most express terms. Now this aggravated her temper beyond anything: she thought it so very strange, and hard, and ungrateful, that she, to whom they were indebted for all they had, who paid them such handsome wages, and made them such generous presents, should be in less esteem than her poor sister Dorothy, who had nothing of that sort in her power. No; but "such as she had she gave

them;" and that happened to be of more sterling value than their mistress' silver and gold. At first Mrs. Abigail was so impatient under the grievance, that she turned away several faithful servants for no other real reason than this private one; but finding that the new comers regularly fell into the same fault, she was soon glad to recall her old domestics.

Mrs. Abigail's temper did not soften as she grew older; she was vexed and tormented that she could not purchase, with all her money, that of which every human bosom feels the need; and every year increased both the cause and the effect of her disquietude. There was not a tradesman, nor a tenant, nor a neighbour, but would touch his hat with more cordiality to Mrs. Dorothy than to Mrs. Abigail; for nobody could help seeing the difference; it was even perceptible as they passed along in the old coach; for, while Mrs. Abigail used always to sit back in an erect posture, looking neither to the right nor left, the round good-natured face of Mrs. Dorothy might always be seen, sometimes smiling at the children, and sometimes nodding to the neighbours as she passed their doors.

Mrs. Abigail used perpetually to complain of her wrongs and grievances to Mrs. Dorothy, who always heard her very patiently, and said what she could to soften and console her. She very rarely ventured to hint either at the reason, or the remedy; for that irritated her beyond anything; and always brought forth

the whole list of her benefactions to witness that the fault was not in *her*.

After a long succession of years, a circumstance occurred in the family which made a greater alteration in its aspect, than if the China images on the best parlour mantelpiece had been transported to the sitting parlour mantelpiece; which would, however, have been considered a most memorable innovation. This was, Mrs. Abigail's taking it into her head to adopt a little orphan girl, a child scarcely five years of age, the daughter of a poor minister lately deceased.

Little Mary was a very pretty, artless, engaging child. Full of spirits, and unconscious of her misfortunes, she entered the great house without any adequate idea of its dignity, and felt herself quite at home the moment she found something to play with. At first the old ladies could not exactly say whether they were most amused or most put out by the noisy frolics of their new inmate. Mrs. Abigail, at least, felt considerable uncertainty on the subject. But Mrs. Dorothy soon found that it added materially to her happiness. For, although she certainly was fidgetted at the unwonted sight of doll's clothes strewed upon the carpet, and to see the covers to the crimson damask chair-bottoms unceremoniously pulled up, and left in rucks and wrinkles, and above all that the cat's back was sometimes stroked the wrong way—yet, the innocent smiles, the playful gambols, and engaging prattle of the child went to her heart, and

awoke sensations of delight and tenderness, which must needs languish, even in benevolent minds, when it is long since they were called into exercise. So much were the good ladies sometimes amused, that the wind might shift from south-east to north-west without its being noted by either of them; a thing unprecedented heretofore. And often Mrs. Abigail herself was so much diverted by her little *protégée* that she has been observed not to gape more than seven times during a whole afternoon.

But notwithstanding all this, things did not go on quite so smoothly as might be imagined. Mrs. Abigail's grand object in adopting the little girl was, that she might train up somebody to love her; and having heard that you may teach a child anything, she thought by taking one so young she should be sure to succeed in her design. Accordingly, she resolved to instil it into her youthful mind, as her highest duty, to love her benefactress; and she did not fail by reiterated instructions to give the child to understand, that for everything she ate and wore and played with, she was indebted to her alone. Now it was a little strange, that after sixty years' experience, this good lady did not know any better way of securing her object; and that she should imagine that so very small a sacrifice as that of giving out a little money from an ample store, would alone procure so invaluable a blessing as that of the affection of a fellow-creature.

Children are excellent physiognomists; and little Mary soon learnt to whom to apply for any assistance or sympathy in her play; and she never failed, when she was tired or sleepy, to run and lay her head on Mrs. Dorothy's lap. It happened not unfrequently, that she was very noisy in her mirth: so much so, that, to use her own expression, "it absolutely went through and through Mrs. Abigail's head;" and even Mrs. Dorothy's did not escape with impunity. Now, on these and similar occasions, when her patience was quite exhausted (which generally happened pretty early), Mrs. Abigail would begin to scold; but in spite of this, and of Mrs. Dorothy's repeated admonitions of "Softly! softly, my little dear!" the little dear would continue romping about till she got such a thorough trimming from Mrs. Abigail, as made her cry sadly, and wish that her own mamma would come again. When the storm was over, the old lady often relented; and trotting to her china closet, she would take a sweet queen cake or macaroon (articles on which she placed her chief dependence in the management of the child) and hold it out to her with a beneficent smile, which seemed to say, "Sure you must love me now." On one of these occasions, as soon as Mary had devoured the bribe, she called her, saying, "Come hither, my dear, come to me, and tell me now, don't you love me?" Retaining a lively remembrance of her recent scolding, the child hesitated; and on the question being repeated, she answered, "No."

"Then you are the most ungrateful little creature that ever was," exclaimed the old lady, "and you may take that for your pains;" so saying, she gave her a smart box on the ear. Mary ran off roaring, and hid her face in Mrs. Dorothy's lap. Mrs. Dorothy knowing that would not do, raised her up, saying—

"Oh, now you are a very naughty little Miss! what, not love poor Mrs. Abigail, who gives you so many pretty things, and such nice cakes? Oh fie! I am quite ashamed of you! Sure you love her, don't you?"

"I love *you*," said the child, "because you don't beat me."

"Well, to be sure," exclaimed Mrs. Abigail, "there is nothing but ingratitude in this world! nothing else: old and young, all alike. Such a little creature as that too, who could have thought it?"

Thus little Mary had her troubles, like other people, in the midst of her apparent prosperity. However, she had a never failing friend and solace in Mrs. Dorothy; and when they were alone, she would often throw her little arms round her neck, and kiss her repeatedly, saying—

"I do love you; I do love you very much, Mrs. *Doroty!*" In return Mrs. Dorothy used to kiss her fondly, and say,—

"And I love you, my darling! my jewel! my pretty one!" never failing to add, "but you know you must love poor Mrs. Abigail too; because she is so good to

you, and gives you such nice things." At which little Mary used to slide off her lap, and run away to play.

One day Mrs. Abigail was taken very ill, and could not leave her bed; and kind-hearted Mrs. Dorothy came down to breakfast with the tears in her eyes.

"What are you crying for?" says little Mary.

"Because, my dear, poor Mrs. Abigail is very ill, and cannot come down stairs."

"Why then, you know, we shall have nobody to scold us all day; so why do you cry for *that?*" said little Mary.

In the spring little Mary was attacked with the measles, and had them very severely. Notwithstanding her ill-nature, Mrs. Abigail was really fond of the child; and she attended her in her illness with much solicitude; took her on her lap, rocked her to and fro; once when she was very restless she spoke to her in soothing tones; and when little Mary, in taking some barley-water, spilt a little of it over her silk gown, and began to cry from the apprehension of being punished for it, Mrs. Abigail said, "Never mind, love, I'll not be angry with you *now.*" Upon which little Mary raised her head, looked up in her face for a moment with surprise, and then said, "I love you, now, Mrs. Abigail."

Mrs. Abigail looked surprised in her turn: she pressed the child to her bosom with unwonted fondness; the tears came in her eyes; for those few words, uttered by a little child, gave her more real pleasure than anything

that had happened to her for many a day. Being alone, she fell into a deep reverie; but the thoughts of a person unaccustomed to reflection are too indistinct and crude for repetition. However, the sense and the substance of her meditation was something like this :—

"What! will one kind word, one act of forbearance and good nature, do more than all the favours I have bestowed? Oh, if I had considered this in early life—if I had but seen that it is not money but kindness, not gifts but good nature, that purchases affection, how differently would my life have passed!—Ah, sister Dorothy! sister Dorothy! I have had all the money, but you have had all the happiness!"

THE SHIPWRECKED LASCAR.

A True Tale.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

—SHE sailed in her pride from the regions of day ;
Her cargo was rich, and her pennons were gay :
Long homeward she scudded, defying the blast,
Till Britain's green hills were descried from the mast.

Then gathered the tempest, then hastened the gale ;
The hearts of her bravest were ready to fail :
Night adds to the horror, and deepens the roar :—
She lies in the morning a wreck on our shore.

And Heaven in its mercy has rescued the crew ;
They live, and return to their country anew :
But one sickly stranger,—unfriended, unknown,—
Is left by his comrades to perish alone.

He thinks of his home, for no shelter has he ;
His wife and his mother are over the sea :
He came from the Islands of Spices afar,
—The dark Asiatic, the gentle Lascar.

He stretches in anguish the languishing limb,
Expecting no pity, no mercy for him ;
—But England has pity—and Oh, there was one,
Who saw his dark face, and the kindness was done.

She took him, she nursed him with tender address ;
And fair was the hand that relieved his distress :
She came like the angel of mercy from far,
To minister health to the dying Lascar.

His wants and her pity could only be known
By broken expressions, and sympathy's tone ;
But pity has language no words can supply,
And gratitude speaks from the eloquent eye.

He watches her coming, for all must appear
In safety and comfort, if *Madame* be near ;
He sits in her *casa*, unclouded by care,
For nothing is wanting, if *Madame* be there.

Her care is rewarded :—the sick man is well ;
And now he must bid her a final farewell :
Have pity, ye sailors, ye sons of the brave !
Oh, bear him in tenderness over the wave !

Borne on by the swell of the ocean he goes
To tell to his kindred the tale of his woes;
To tell his dark beauty, with many a tear,
Of *Madame's* kind *casa*, that sheltered him here.

And O, that the knowledge she strove to impart,
May lighten the gloom of his desolate heart!
And long as he lives will be heard from afar,
The blessings and prayers of the grateful Lascar.

RALPH RICHARDS, THE MISER.

BY JEFFERYS TAYLOR.

CHAPTER I.

RALPH RICHARDS was born, nobody knows where, and nobody knows when. He was brought up, nobody knows how, by nobody knows whom, and he died at last, either of old age or starving, nobody knows which.

And whether he was handsome or plain, large or small, long or short, nobody knows. Whether he was like any one else, or like no one but himself;—whether in figure he most resembled a magnified animalcule, or an Indian idol, nobody now knows, and nobody ever cared; for as Ralph Richards cared for nobody but himself, nobody but himself cared for Ralph Richards.

Neither is it possible to state at this time, what were the precise habits and modes of life of this extraordinary being. By what means he contrived to acquire so much, and to spend so little money, he never told; nor would it probably be important to learn: suffice it to say, that his character and conduct were perfectly

suitable to a regular money-bag miser, for such he was known to be; but whether he lived upon wind or water, upon oyster shells or chopped straw, it would be equally difficult and useless to determine.

There can, however, be no reasonable doubt entertained, as to the genuineness of the thoughts, words, and actions, that are, in the following pages, imputed to him; if they should not be found inconsistent with the feelings and views of a man, who was completely selfish, yet most incredibly self-denying; who, with considerable acuteness and energy of mind, evinced the most astonishing stupidity and weakness; who could foresee and obviate the most obscure and remote contingencies, yet was all his life blind to the most glaring absurdity that could possibly be presented to the mind of a rational being. He, in fact, felt and acted as one might be expected to do who was to such a degree infatuated with the love of possession, or who was what is commonly called *a miser*, although that term rather implies the consequences of the disposition upon personal happiness, than the disposition itself.

Ralph Richards's conduct was regulated by two or three very simple notions. "Bread," thought he, "is bread, and cheese is cheese; but *money* is bread and cheese too. A house is a house, and a field is a field; but money is both, and therefore better than either. So I will keep my *money*, and let other people keep their goods; for if I exchange my money for their

bread, or cheese, or houses, or fields, then I shall have ood things, but they will have better." Ralph Richards, however, forgot that money was *neither* bread nor cheese, house nor field, *whilst* he kept it, and that its only value consists in its being the medium of that exchange, which he regarded as unwise.

His dwelling, which he held upon the same terms as the sand-martins and rabbits, his only neighbours, was something between a hermitage and a hog-sty; yet was not to be compared to either; for though it exhibited the poverty of the first, it wanted its cleanliness, and while it possessed the less pleasing characteristics of the second, it was entirely destitute of its comfortable profusion, so that a hog and a hermit would have been equally ill at ease as his guests.

At the bottom of a forsaken sand-pit, and on that which was the windy side, when it blew from the south, had this curious and cunning animal scooped out his den; to be distinguished only from the abode of some burrowing quadruped, by a few massive logs, which formed a kind of barricade at the entrance.

Here Ralph Richards had maintained undisputed possession for many years, rarely observed, and never molested; for he who could feel no apprehension from the appearance of supernatural beings in such a situation, was, by the common people, reckoned among them; and therefore his residence was as carefully shunned after sun-set, as the church-yard itself. Sometimes,

indeed, at noon-day, two or three idle boys would scramble down the sides of the bank, and glance a cautious eye at the miser's retreat, but they would speedily scramble up again when the old man appeared at the mouth of his cave; which he generally contrived to do, upon the most distant alarm; and he usually found, that the first sight of his charming visage was quite enough for all purposes of defence. Ralph Richards was not at all mortified at the poor compliment that was thus paid to his physiognomy, but was very well contented that so it should be; since in his situation, it was more to his advantage to frighten than to fascinate; for he well knew that this terror of him and his haunts was the best imaginable security for himself and his hoards.

Within a short distance of the miser's residence, there were standing the venerable and dignified remains of a structure that had been erected probably soon after the Conquest. Although it appeared to have been a place of some importance, from the strength and extent of the building, its history was involved in considerable obscurity. Conjecture, however, furnished abundantly what history denied, and many and opposite were the opinions concerning it. The *virtuosi* of the neighbouring town, stickled stoutly and warmly for its being a prior erection to a somewhat similar building in a town a few miles distant. On the other hand, their opponents, who maintained that *their* town was indisputably the

Camulodunum of the Romans, asserted strenuously, that the castle of which they were the champions, had been the residence of Boadicea, Queen of the ancient Britons. Their adversaries, again, smiled and sneered at these pretensions, and attributed this edifice to the idle conceit of a thrifty merchant, in the reign of Henry VIII. Thus they contended; but somehow, unaccountably, it happened, that the disputants on each side were always solicitous for the honour of that building of the two which was the nearest their own dwellings.

These disquisitions, however, it may readily be imagined, were as uninteresting to Ralph Richards, as those respecting the seat of the soul. Whether the castles had been constructed by Nimrod or Jack Cade, by Semiramis or Joan of Arc, he neither knew nor cared. He, indeed, knew something more than others of the ruins first mentioned, for he had tenanted beneath their walls, during many a severe winter, and would gladly have remained there, had he not been dislodged by the sudden prostration of his apartment in a high wind.

Satisfaction and regret filled his mind up on this occasion in nearly equal proportions, when the miser perceived that his bones were preserved, while his cell was destroyed. It was upon this emergency, that after having, with considerable difficulty, disengaged himself and his treasures from the ponderous mass of crumbling ruins, he bethought him of the excavations in the sand-pit;

where, after having exercised some industry and ingenuity in preparing and enlarging this new residence, he, at length, invested both himself and his property as in a bank, calculated in this instance, to afford equal security to both. He therefore deserted the old castle, as he thought, for ever; but, many years after he renewed his acquaintance with it, in a way that remains now to be explained.

CHAPTER II.

RALPH RICHARDS found it needful occasionally to depart from the letter of the rule that he had laid down for himself; and for other people's good things was positively obliged sometimes to exchange his money which was better.

As he had no debtors, so he had no creditors, but his own most patient and accommodating intestines. None, therefore, beside, had any demands upon him; and these had been so accustomed to transact business at long credit, as in general to remain pretty quiet till the miser's time of payment arrived.

One day, after having expostulated with his necessities the usual time, he selected a small copper coin, to make a most needful purchase. Now beside the unpleasant sensations which the miser experienced on these

occasions, in parting with the money, he was liable to encounter the curious eyes of many, who gladly availed themselves of an opportunity to get a sight of this curious animal out of his den; when he was commonly addressed in a far more familiar manner than was agreeable, and once he received a very unceremonious handling, during which, the operators had vainly endeavoured to explore the intricacies of his incomprehensible garments, which civility was accompanied with a threat, that if money was not to be found there, his bank would be applied to in his absence.

In order, therefore, to avoid adventures of this kind (for the miser was by no means so tired of his monotonous life, as to desire such incidents for variety sake), he usually made these excursions when it was nearly dark; but in the present instance it appeared absolutely impossible to delay his journey till the evening.

He determined, however, to proceed by a less-peopled road, than that which formed the nearest communication between himself and the town; and instead of it, took a lonely and circuitous path, which led him through the old ruins.

Neither curiosity, nor any other sentiment existed in his mind in a sufficient degree, to induce him once to visit these remains since he resided amongst them, although the distance was scarcely a quarter of a mile from his present dwelling; nor was it his intention now,

to bestow a look or a thought upon them, more than might enable him to keep his legs, in traversing the fragments and rubbish with which this rough overgrown spot was covered.

This he found little difficulty in doing, till he came to a part, where, owing to a recent fall of a considerable portion of the building, the ruins were more thickly scattered. Here, in setting his foot upon a loose stone, it so far betrayed him, that he involuntarily and suddenly extended his right arm to recover his balance, and in so doing, ejaculated the piece of money from his hitherto well-closed fist.

Had his head dropped from his shoulders, could he have retained his consciousness, he would not have felt more sudorific dismay, than he did at that moment. With unbelieving eyes, he stared at the vacant palm of his hand; in which the impression was yet so strong, that he could scarcely persuade himself the coin was not still there. The conviction, however, shortly forced itself upon his mind, that the money was—he knew not where; that is to say—*lost;* when he instantly formed an iron resolution to *find* it, or brave the utmost fury of his already clamorous internals.

The probability of being able to discern a piece of money, dropped, or rather thrown amongst heaps of ruins, overgrown in many places with herbs six feet high, would, to any but Ralph Richards, have appeared small indeed. He, however felt determined, that he

would not eventually *lose* it; and of course, therefore, he felt certain, that he should eventually *find* it.

It is an advantage possessed by energetic minds, to be free from many of those fears, as to the possible attainment of an object, which weaken the purpose, relax the exertions, and commonly insure the failure of the doubtful; who, by continually pausing to ascertain the height of an obstruction in the way, lose that *momentum* which might enable them to surmount it.

Had the miser dropped a halfpenny in the Caspian Sea, the practicability of emptying it would probably have crossed his mind; so that he was not likely in the present instance to be disheartened by a few brickbats and nettles. Beside, as a penny saved is a penny got, he felt a degree of that interest in the undertaking which he always experienced, and which enlivened his soul, when hunting for *money*.

After having unbuttoned and untied, searched, knocked, and shaken every known and unknown recess of his complex drapery, the miser proceeded carefully to examine the ground immediately adjacent. Nothing, however, that would have passed for a penny with a drunken man in the dark, could he find. After some time occupied in this kind of search, he resolved to go more systematically to work. Accordingly he placed himself exactly upon the spot where he had stumbled, and after an accurate survey of the ground, he estimated pretty exactly, the area likely to contain the money,

allowing so much of radius and circumference as the centrifugal force, and the arc described by his hand, would probably amount to, and no more; for as he was neither an antiquarian nor a botanist, he had no wish to become acquainted with any more of the nettles and rubbish than were likely to be acquainted with his money.

Kneeling down, therefore, he began regularly to part the entangled herbage with his hands, and to remove every brickbat, stick, or stone, that he conceived might be guilty of harbouring the fugitive; thus prosecuting his researches in a way that would render it quite needless to go over the same ground again. But a task executed in this manner, was likely to occupy our hero three or four days; for, after being engaged thus diligently for several hours, he had traversed but a small portion of the space he had marked out.

As he was hungry in the morning, he was, of course, not less so at noon. Still the thought of abandoning his quest, or of employing another penny for the present, in lieu of the one he had lost, never entered his brain. The twilight, however, in process of time arrived, and compelled the old man to think of postponing his operations until the ensuing morning; when, just as he was about sorrowfully to rise, a small circular block of stone, partly buried in the earth, caught his attention. It required but a slight effort to displace it, and on doing so, he discovered that it had been carefully fitted

into a stone of a similar shape upon which it had been placed.

To this he immediately transferred his attention, and could just discern something like a hollow in the surface hitherto covered by the part he had removed. It was too dark to acquire much farther information with his eyes; but upon introducing his fingers, they encountered a moveable substance, which he instantly knew to be a coin!

Scarcely had he touched it, when he hastily replaced the cover, and rising from his knees, cast a careful and a suspicious glance around, to convince himself that no one was at hand. Seeing the coast was clear, he again removed it, and enclosed the coin between his fingers; then drawing the edge across the stone, he examined the glisten, and immediately deposited it in a part of his dress, whence no evolution, however sudden, could possibly remove it. He then made the best of his way home, and in consideration of the coin he had found, obtained his own consent to employ another penny in the room of that he had not found; and as it was now sufficiently dark, he took the shortest road to the neighbouring town, made his purchase, and returned unmolested and unobserved; appropriated a part to his necessities, and betook himself to his couch.

CHAPTER III.

As it was too dark when the miser reached his dwelling for him to make any particular observations upon the coin he had discovered, he contented himself with putting it in a place of safety for the night; for it never occurred to him to procure artificial light, since that could not be obtained without setting his gold on fire; nor, indeed, was his curiosity by any means hot enough to burn a hole in his economy. He had fully ascertained that the piece was *gold*, and that was nearly all he wished to know; so he calmly waited for that gratuitous illustration, which he doubted not the next morning would afford.

It was not, therefore, impatience to know whether this was an antediluvian or a lunar half-guinea, that deprived him of his wonted slumbers; neither could it be indigestion, or the fumes of wine: so it was, however, that sleep entirely forsook him; and his mind was now as much occupied with the events of the day, as his body had recently been.

His sagacity led him to conjecture, that the curiously concealed box he had discovered, was indicative of something more than the single coin which it enclosed, and as this surmise strengthened in his mind, it gave an entirely new aspect to the circumstance.

As he reflected with increasing interest upon this subject, he suddenly recollected that he had left the stone displaced and exposed, so as to excite the attention of any one who might happen to pass that way early in the morning. The probability was small, that any one would tread the mazes of the haunted ruins, before the complete arrival of broad and courage-giving daylight; for many a ghost-story concerning this spot, had been told in the snug chimney corners of the neighbourhood; and many a lass—not to say a lad—had found some difficulty in summoning resolution sufficient to extinguish the evening taper after such a recital. Small, therefore, as the chance was, that this spot would be visited before daylight, and certain as it was, that in that case this money-chest would be invisible, the miser was very uneasy, and ardently wished it in the same circumstances of concealment in which he had found it.

It was now the dead of the night, and whether Ralph Richards was capable of any sensation analogous to that which prevented others from approaching the ruins after sunset, it is impossible to say. Certain it is, however, that although he most fervently desired the readjustment of the stone, he did not immediately rise to replace it.

After a while, however, he *did* arise, determined to ease his mind of this care. He therefore left his bed, if such it could be called, and feeling his way as he had

been accustomed to do heretofore, proceeded to remove the cumbrous fastenings from the mouth of his cave. He then crawled out, and making good his securities, again set his face towards the ruins.

It was one of those nights, in which an owl might have been glad of a lantern. The horizon was as invisible as it was in the farthest recesses of the miser's subterranean labyrinths. Finding, therefore, that his eyes were likely to be of no more use to him in directing his course than his nose, our hero resolved —since the sense of feeling was the only one applicable to the present occasion, to touch the ground in as many points as possible, and therefore he immediately descended to all fours.

In this position he crept along, feeling his way so accurately, that he was perfectly acquainted with the depth and temperature of every puddle that he encountered. Vainly did he strain his eyes at the first touch of the cold water, to gain some idea of its direction or extent—he had the gratification of passing through most of these refreshing pools the longest way.

Nevertheless, he was not materially wrong as to his course, and having reached a cluster of trees which now stood between him and the ruins, he found it advisable to resume his erect position. It was considerably windy, and the continued rustling of the invisible branches, which occasionally slightly touched him as he passed, might, without any great effort of

the imagination, have been attributed to the agency of the supernaturals, especially as this grove had always been regarded as their head quarters; yet it is probable, that Ralph Richards experienced little but bodily inconvenience from this expedition at present.

He had, it is said, almost cleared the trees which separated him from the ruins, when something like a pale light glanced from a short distance, during a violent gust of wind, but disappeared as the breeze subsided. The miser stopped short, and cringed; for, although he was heartily tired of the darkness, he was by no means pleased with this light. He, however, fixed his eye in the same direction, and after a while, the gust returned, and the light again slightly appeared, but presently vanished as before.

It was not until a considerable interval had elapsed, that Ralph Richards ventured from the spot upon which he stood. At last, however, he advanced a few steps, when a ghastly, moonshiny figure stood full in sight, though how near, he could not guess. The miser stared for an instant, when the upper part of the figure formed more distinctly into a grim, grinning visage, partly averted; but the eyes of which were fixed upon the old man, with an intensity of gaze, that felled him to the earth. With a horrified shudder, and an inarticulate groan, he clasped the ground, which he moistened with perspiration; that he knew not until then, existed in his body: wishing that his money and

he could sink together to the centre of the earth. A mighty blast then raved among the trees, but presently died away; when the apparition addressed the prostrate miser as follows, in a low, yet distinct voice, interrupted occasionally by the howling of the wind.

"Ah! wherefore fear or worship *me?*
A phantom true,
Thou dost pursue.
Thy shining god thou dost not see,
Though beaming bright
With silvery light!

"Oh, wretch! lie close, and bite the dust,
Thy chosen food,
Thine evil good;
Which mouldering bones have here in trust;
—From him concealed,
To whom revealed!

"Dig 'neath these walls, where mazes wind,
Till thou behold
The hidden gold:
Till thou the earth-worm's treasure find,
Dig and obtain,
Yet dig in vain.

After an interval occasioned by the storm, the apparition repeated,

"Ah! wherefore fear, or worship *me?*
A phantom true
Thou dost pursue.
Thy shining god thou dost not see,
Though beaming bright,
With silvery light!"

The spectre then vanished instantly; but it was not until morning dawn that Ralph Richards knew it had done so; for neither head nor hand did he move till daylight insinuated itself between his fingers.

Now, as to this apparition:—although the actual manner in which it was produced, has not certainly transpired, yet there are so many ways in which it could have been accomplished, that it would seem mightily uncandid in the reader to consider this tale as a mere romance, on account thereof, however incredible it may at first appear. But, whether the nether part of a decayed post (which is certainly capable of becoming luminous) had been wickedly carved into the shape of an image, behind which any one might have stood to repeat the above mysterious lines; or whether any ill-favoured person had rubbed his face with a stale mackerel (after the manner that the fisherman's face was rubbed with the mullet, that he presented to Tiberius), and so had transferred, by such anointing, the radiant effluvia to his own countenance; or whether, finally, some ill-disposed, but not unhandy youth, had cunningly scraped away the heart of a Norfolk turnip, on the rind of which he had naughtily imprinted eyes, nose, and mouth, and had privily thrust therein a candle, at the same time uttering the words aforesaid, it is not at this distance of time possible, nor indeed is it needful, to determine. Suffice it to say—and it rests upon authority that will not be called in question,

that the figure appeared, the words were spoken, and the miser frightened, and that most wofully; and it was not before the sun had fairly risen, that he could venture to look about him.

He found himself close against the ruins, and that the stone was precisely in the situation in which he had left it. He, however, felt quite indisposed just then to meddle with it, and therefore bent his steps homeward, where he remained perfectly quiet for several days.

CHAPTER IV.

WONDER is said in general to last about nine days; but when coupled with fear it lasts ten: for at the end of that time, Ralph Richards determined to have another look at the stone that he had found hidden beneath the ruins, and this resolution was somewhat strengthened by two or three sentences in the mysterious communication that had been made to him; for notwithstanding the obscurity and the apparent inconsistency of some parts of it, there were others so comprehensible, that even the terror and confusion of mind experienced by the miser during their recital, did not prevent their being deeply impressed upon his memory. "*Dig and obtain; yet dig in vain,*" were words continually haunting his mind. "If I *dig and obtain,*" thought he, "it will be *my* fault if I dig in

vain; and as to that bit of moonshine, it has given me full leave to try, let it be what it may. So I'll just poke about a little yonder, and see what is to be seen."

Ralph Richards accordingly issued forth early on the ensuing morning; just at the time when he thought there was light enough to make a ghost invisible; and darkness enough to render himself so too. It was cold, raw, and foggy, and the grass and shrubs were drenched with the dew; so that before the old man had reached the ruins, he felt deplorably wet and uncomfortable. As, however, his mind was not accustomed to consult his body, his resolution to proceed was not influenced in the smallest degree by that circumstance.

Everything was as quiet and lonely here as he could wish. There was not a ghost, a gossip, nor even a goose to be seen; nor anything to be heard, but the crowing of the distant cock, and the periodical cawing of a daw perched upon the old wall, who seemed both surprised and disturbed by the miser's presence.

The stone from which Ralph Richards had taken the coin, had been deposited within the site of a large circular column, that occupied nearly the centre of the ruins. This bulky pier, which was intended to have the appearance of solidity, was in fact hollow, and had doubtless a regular, although a concealed entrance. But the recent fall of a large portion, at once revealed its construction, and gave easy admission.

Ralph Richards could not help casting two or three

suspicious glances, as he entered, at the heavy masses that still hung doubtfully overhead; for the greater part of the column was yet standing. As, however, it was impossible for him either to help or to hinder any further movements of the building, he gave himself no more concern about it, but proceeded immediately to business.

With little difficulty, the old man loosened the stone yet remaining in the earth, having something more than a surmise, that he should be paid for his trouble. He was, therefore, somewhat disappointed, yet not altogether discouraged, when he found nothing beneath, but the soil in which it had been imbedded. After having burrowed away the earth for some depth, to no purpose, he once more examined the stones between which the coin had been deposited; but after turning them about in all directions, he was convinced, that they were solid blocks, and had never contained anything beside.

With this conviction he was just putting them away, when he perceived the outlines of a man's hand faintly chiselled upon the side of the upper one, having the fore finger extended, as if in the act of pointing. Ralph Richards immediately had the wit to place the block precisely in its original position, and perceived then, that the finger pointed downwards. This was a perfectly intelligible hint, and one that would have been sufficient for a much less sagacious mind than our hero possessed.

"Now, good luck to that fly-away penny!" thought he. "Ralph Richards does not throw his money away for nothing." Having apparently obtained the scent, this true-bred terrier began with amazing vigour to scratch, claw, and burrow, in the direction suggested by the hand.

At first, he contented himself with making hastily a funnel-shaped hole; hoping that the sign, and the thing signified, might be sociably near. He found it needful however, shortly, to proceed in a more regular manner; for before the excavation was a yard in depth, the loose earth was perpetually tumbling down and re-occupying its former place. Nevertheless, having an idea that the object of his search might be within reach of a probe, he prepared a stick for the purpose of trying the experiment, and, after thrusting it down with some difficulty, felt that it encountered a substance, which offered a complete resistance to his further efforts. He then withdrew the stick, and eagerly introduced his hand; but his greedy fingers were not to be indulged with the feel of the coin at present; for there was a considerable mass of earth to be removed before they could reach the substance beneath.

Finding that it would require better light, and better tools, to proceed further with advantage, he judged it best to remit his labours until the next morning; so, after carefully scraping the earth into the hole again, he arose from the spot and returned home.

Having provided himself with a curious nondescript implement, which was accustomed to the various functions of a shovel, a cleaver, and a bolt to his door, and which was intended in case of invasion, for a battle-axe, the miser rose early in the morning, and bent his course towards the ruins.

As he turned an angle of the building within a few yards of which he had been engaged, he met a person whom of all beings in the creation he least wished to encounter. This was an elderly female, whose professional pursuits were of that kind which in times past might have placed her in a situation where the lingering juices of her body would have been very rapidly exhaled.

This lady, commonly called Dame Trudge, was, in plain terms, a reputed witch. She was attired in the usual habiliments of an old woman; but had, over all, a large, ragged, man's coat, and a man's hat upon her head. She had, moreover, a pair of broad buckles in her shoes, and carried a walking-staff, which seemed rather too high for her convenience. The meeting between this personage and our hero, though not equally satisfactory, was at the moment, equally unexpected on both sides.

"Ah, old Grope! what ye're at your old trade again, arn't ye?—but ye'd better let that there alone, I reckon."

"Let what alone?" muttered the miser, slipping his tool behind his clothes.

"Why, grubbing up th' arth yonder, ye old thief!"

Ralph Richards could do little but mumble inarticulately in reply: for beside that an old man is seldom a match for an old woman, when the conversation takes a lively turn, he was so little used to exchange words with any human being, that he scarcely knew when he had uttered one syllable in which corner of his mouth to thrust his tongue for the next: he contrived, however, in process of time, to repel the old woman's accusation, and to deny that he was a thief.

"Why, yes y'ar!" said the Dame, who laboured under no kind of impediment, "ye're hunting after that as an't none o' yourn."

The miser thought that he had as good a right as the old woman to the proceeds of the gold-mine, especially if he undertook to work it; yet feeling very unwilling that his designs should be known, he contented himself with stating that he had lost a piece of money, and had been trying to find it.

"Oh, yes—I dare say you have;" said she, "but if you get to groping there, you'll see that as will make your old bones shake, as they haven't done, a bit,—I'm bound for't!" so saying, knitting her brows, and jerking her head on one side, the old woman brandished her stick over the old man's head and shoulders, and after two or three most portentous flourishes, she stumped away.

Although it may be as well to suppose, that the cir-

cumstances here related occurred some years ago, and that the miser and witch have long since demised, it is certain, that the race of witches is by no means extinct, any more than that of misers. In many country towns, there is still superstition enough to maintain a person of this description, whose aid is frequently called in to a split thumb or a bad leg, when the unguents of the parish doctor may chance to have failed. Dame Trudge liked the feel of money almost as well as Ralph Richards, but it was because she had a genuine taste for the comforts of life; nor did she ever run in debt with her own necessities when she could help it. She had, therefore, a sharp eye for a penny, which she had more ways than one of obtaining. She had, for many years, been employed to distribute letters from the post-office to the lone houses scattered over a considerable extent of the surrounding country; to do which, this nimble old lady daily accomplished a journey of more than a dozen miles. The income arising from this service was further augmented by continual perquisites for the delivery of notes, parcels, and messages from distant families; she being a regular circulating medium of communication between houses separated by thirty or forty ploughed fields, at all seasons, and in all weathers; for frost, fog, and flood, were alike unable to stop her.

To the money thus obtained, an extensive practice in the way of her profession before alluded to, made a very comfortable addition; and, connected with this,

she had another string to her bow, in the use of which, our hero was, in the course of his present undertaking, likely to be concerned.

There was a long shady lane, lying between the town and a neighbouring village, which, at one part where the hedge was low, commanded a complete view of the haunted ruins, they being just there, within the distance of two fields. Now, when the sun was on the meridian of Greenwich, or indeed at any time while it was fairly above the horizon, this circumstance was an inducement with some to visit the spot, and was not an objection to any. But, when the sun was exchanged for the moon, or the moon for a lantern, the case was quite altered, and nothing but *needs must*, could drive any one down that lane after dark.

The why and the wherefore of this, was derived from several long stories current in the neighbourhood, which were boldly asserted by some, and denied by others; but had more or less influence upon all; for many a one who cared not to answer the question, "why *shouldn't* you go down that lane?" found it convenient to ask, "why *should* I?"

The old woman saw that it would be advantageous at once to assist the credibility of these tales, and the credulity of her neighbours, since she was in the habit of granting passports for a trifling pecuniary consideration to those whom dire necessity obliged to travel that way at night.

For this purpose, she occasionally took a lonely and a midnight walk herself among the ruins, and in the meadows between them and the lane; when, with a very little variation of her usual voice and manner, she contrived to personify that which was sufficiently alarming in such a situation.

It was during an excursion of this kind, one moonlight night, that she discovered the appearance of earth having been recently moved at the spot where the miser had been engaged. She instantly guessed that Ralph Richards had been there, and as she had long wished to open an account with him, she determined to enter into partnership in his present speculations, the nature of which she was at no loss to conjecture. The old woman was arranging her plans with this view, when she had the unexpected meeting before mentioned, and this terminated as we have seen, with a threat, which she resolved to put in execution, as the readiest means of making him tractable.

CHAPTER V.

RALPH RICHARDS watched the old woman until she was fairly out of sight; when, muttering something that was meant only for his own ear, he entered the ruins, and resumed his labours

Having again removed the loose earth which he had replaced the night before, he next endeavoured to enlarge the hole, so as to obtain some idea of the substance beneath; but there was so little light, that he could only ascertain, that it was either brick or stone, and was unable to discern whether it was in one mass or otherwise. As, however, he had exposed but a very small surface, he proceeded, with great labour, to chop, dig, pick, and shovel away the stony rubbish which appeared to have been deposited there, on purpose to render further progress as difficult as possible. He had occupied the greater part of the day in this manner, before he had cleared a space large enough to stand upon conveniently; and then could form no conjecture as to the size and shape of that upon which he stood, much less of what was beneath it:—a slight accident, however, presently gave him some information.

He was very industriously wedging his tool between two loose stones or bricks immediately under him, and had administered a slight blow with his foot to assist its penetration; when, without a moment's warning, stones, bricks, earth, and miser, descended simultaneously to the depth of about sixteen feet, and alighted upon the next hard substance that presented itself.

Ralph Richards perspired for the third time in his life, when he found himself suddenly immured in a vault nearly as dark as pitch. He remained seated

upon the floor of his new apartment some minutes, before he could so far regain the power of volition, as to prove the state of his bones, every one of which he expected to find broken. As it happened, however, he had the same good fortune now, as upon a former occasion, when the ruins tumbled on his back; for he found all and every one of his own most durable and serviceable bones, muscles, and sinews, as able as ever, to resume their wonted functions.

He felt now, for once in his life, more tempted to look towards the heavens than the earth, for he was well aware, that the way in was likely to be the only way out. There was, indeed, the irregular aperture through which he had descended, and it was large enough for him to pass, though riding astride of one of his most roomy hutches; but, amongst all the six sides of a square apartment, there is none in which the exit is altogether so incommodious, as in that opposite to the one upon which one happens to be standing.

The miser was reflecting with considerable interest upon his situation, when the words of the apparition darted like lightning across his mind. "Dig and obtain, yet dig in vain," thought he. "This, then is it; the treasure is here without a doubt, and so am I, and we are likely to remain together, as long as my old bones shall last. There's time enough to get acquainted then," muttered he, "and I can hold out a bit." He then prepared to grope his way round the vault; for the dim

ray admitted by the skylight, exhibited little more than a foot or two of the spot immediately under it. He made his way for some distance, till he came to a wall. It was here completely dark, so that he was unable to discern an obstruction over which he stumbled, as he crept along. He felt that it was a chest of some sort, and imagining that the treasure might be contained within it, he applied his fingers accurately round the top edge which projected a little, and endeavoured to raise it; when, after two or three slight efforts, the part he touched broke away, and remained in his hand. He eagerly thrust his other hand into the opening, when, instead of coin, he felt a round smooth substance, and immediately after, his fingers encountered the jagged inequalities of a human skull, which rolled upon its side at his touch. The miser slunk away like a detected thief, and proceeding to the spot upon which he had alighted, resolved to tax his invention vigorously for some means of escape: for he had little curiosity to examine further the contents of this chest, since it seemed to contain nothing but old bones, and there was but one set in the world that he cared a straw about.

The miser found by repeated trials, that the earth and stones which had accompanied him in his fall, would not with the most skilful building, form a mound high enough, by several inches, to enable him to reach the orifice through which he had heretofore proceeded. The next thing to be done then, was an important

question, and one that occupied his individual attention, for a considerable time. At last, thought he, "a dead man shall help a living one. I'll just borrow his hutch a minute; and if he won't *give* leave, I know he won't refuse it." Then retracing his steps to the coffin, he boldly raised one end, and heard, as he expected, the bones rattle down to the other. Then placing it upon the earth and rubbish, raised to the greatest altitude, he gently stepped upon it and found now, that he was just able to reach the brickwork above, and gave a slight spring, in order to raise himself through it, when the brittle lid gave way, and Ralph Richards once more descended to the earth, accompanied this time by the coffin and the dead man's bones, which were scattered widely around him.

Little dismayed, however, the nimble and indestructible old man immediately tumbled up, readjusted the earth and stones with more care, placed the coffin bottom upwards upon them, and stepping up more warily, was at last, by this means, enabled to scramble out; thus proving incontestably, that if the living can't raise the dead, the dead can raise the living.

Scarcely was he out, however, ere he wished himself in again; for as nothing but the love of life could make him for a moment forget the love of money, his fears concerning the first had no sooner fled, than his hopes respecting the other returned; and he felt strongly persuaded, from the indications already mentioned, that the

vault contained something more than he had yet discovered in it. He therefore looked down again wishfully; but could only see the bones which lay below, and part of the coffin that had been the means of his resurrection. Uninviting as this prospect was, and alarming as it had lately been, he determined nevertheless to enter again, and renew his researches.

He reflected, however, that it would be advisable to provide himself with means of descent, less rapid than he had before possessed, and which might help him to ascend also; seeing that the attraction of gravity would only accommodate him one way: a spade also it would be needful to procure; for the tool he had hitherto employed, had fared worse than its owner, being broken in its fall. A light, moreover, he judged would be indispensable, since without one, it would be impossible to distinguish a coffer from a coffin.

But here two considerable difficulties immediately presented themselves; for first and foremost, a spade, a rope, and a candle would cost more money than he had expended for anything but food, during twenty years of his life; and secondly, for that very reason, he could not hope to procure them without exciting the curiosity, and probably the suspicions of the neighbourhood, and he was, as has been mentioned, very unwilling to draw the public attention to himself or his concerns. As, however, he saw no alternative that had less difficulty in it, and as he felt an irresistible incli-

nation to resume his investigations, he resolved to run the hazard, and hazard the run to the adjacent town, as soon as it was sufficiently dark.

CHAPTER VI.

THE miser did not forget the old woman's parting threat, and although he thought it unlikely that she could conjure up anything more alarming than that which he had already witnessed, he felt that it would be highly desirable to prevent any kind of interference, if possible.

There were apparently but two ways of dealing with the old lady, that seemed at all likely to prosper; the first was, to placate her with money; the second to encounter her with her own weapons: and seeing that she proposed to make *his* old bones shake, to endeavour to make *her* old bones shake previously. The first of these schemes had the same objection as every other that required him to dispossess himself of any part of his property; besides, he well knew that it would be highly dangerous ever to let the old woman know the feel of his cash, which it was no fault of hers that she had never yet done. The other plan, therefore, he thought the least objectionable, and of course the most feasible, seeing it would cost nothing, and would not probably need to be repeated. "If *my* old skull bone

won't scare you," thought he, "I'll find one that will." With these words, as they comprehended the sum of his arrangements, he dismissed the subject from his mind.

Soon after the old miser stole into the town, and meekly entered the first shop that was likely to furnish his commodity. He hoped that good luck would favour him so far as to give him an interview with the shopkeeper alone. Not so. There were five or six persons there, who all turned their eyes upon him, as he was accosted with,—"Ah! Squire Guinea-pig!—what for you, sir?" but, without waiting for an answer, as the old miser was not expected to give a very important order, Mr. Sharpsly proceeded to serve his other customers, to whom in the meantime our hero's unexpected appearance afforded a little gossip: at last, however, he obtained his candles, and hastened to make his more important purchases.

For this purpose he next entefed the shop of Mr. Tilpenny, where almost any article with two ends and a middle, excepting an epic poem and a mile-stone, was to be had:—from a gold pin to a roasting-spit; from a smelling bottle to a tar-barrel; from the cedar of a pencil-stick, to the man-trap that groweth upon the wall. Happily there was no one in the shop where the rope and the shovel were to be bought, but the owner himself; who in general was perfectly contented to sweep his customer's money into his till without making re-

marks, or asking questions: the appearance of Ralph Richards, however, awakened his vigilance, if not his curiosity; for, knowing the wonderful attraction that existed between the miser and the precious metals, he felt some uneasiness lest his gold should leap from his pocket, and elope with our hero: he, therefore, kept, what is called, "*a sharp look out!*" but this was quite needless, for the old man was far too long-sighted to be a thief.

Having accomplished this business better than he expected, Ralph Richards made the best of his way home; whence, after having provided himself with the means of procuring a light, he proceeded to the ruins.

Nobody can have a new handle to an old broom in a country town, without the cognizance probably of several officious neighbours. But a new head to an old horse could scarcely have excited more gossip than the circumstance of the old miser buying a pound of candles. It would be quite useless to mention the various surmises and hypotheses that were built upon this event; suffice it to say, that it quickly came to Dame Trudge's ears, who, if she had forgotten her threat, was thus forcibly reminded of it.

Immediately guessing the destination of these candles, she resolved to be at hand, to snuff them, if needful, and determined, with this view, to visit the ruins at midnight; where, and when, she had no doubt of finding the old miser, groping away, not very far from

the surface; for she was entirely ignorant of the subterraneous apartment, of which he had taken such rapid possession.

As, however, the time was not arrived by several hours, when she thought it would be advisable to venture forth, she had ample leisure to prepare her terrors. These consisted of, first a white sheet—that well-known skin, guise, or garment of a ghost—and a high conical white cap, with a long feather on each side. Besides these, she provided two or three pieces of tobacco pipe, each about an inch long, with which, on such occasions, she was wont to prop open her charming jaws. There was, this night, a small shred of moon, which suited her scheme, as she never preferred a totally dark night; for somehow, goblins, like guide-posts, are apt to be invisible then.

With these accoutrements, this praiseworthy old woman had contrived to frighten many a penny out of her credulous neighbours' pockets, into her own; and, by the same means, she hoped to frighten a good part of the miser's treasure into the same place.

Squire Guinea-pig, as we have seen, had some idea of *having the start* of her. When he arrived at the vault, he sent in his newly acquired shovel, and a few other things, by the same conveyance that had accommodated himself at first, and then, making his rope fast to the top, easily descended by it.

His first business was with the skull-bone, before

mentioned. "Two heads are better than one," muttered he, as he took it up, and twisted it on to the small end of his stick. Having done this, he laid it carefully aside, and proceeded to the necessary operation of striking a light.

Any one beside, who could have been present, would have felt somewhat impressed with the sight which those transient but vivid flashes exhibited. The miser, however, saw nothing but the tinder-box and his own knuckles, until the candle was lighted. He then perceived, that the coffin over which he had stumbled, was the first in a row that had extended from one end of the vault to the other; raised by a ledge of brickwork, about two feet from the ground. The coffins, however, with the exception of this one, had all long since perished, and had deposited their contents regularly beneath them. So strangely durable are those most valueless things, a dead man's bones, that they frequently remain entire, when scarcely an atom of the substances employed for their preservation is to be seen.

However profitable a suitable train of reflections arising from those objects might have been, they were by no means likely to be productive of that kind of benefit which the miser desired: and he felt convinced, that the failure of the brickwork overhead, had accidentally introduced him to a place, very different from that indicated by the hand carved upon the stone.

He was carefully and noiselessly, with his candle in

his hand, perusing every crack and cranny in the walls around him, before he quitted the vault; when he heard something like the sound of a footstep overhead. He listened more attentively, and was presently informed, by the descent of some loose earth from above, that his old enemy was at hand. His usual ready wit, unfettered by sentiment or scruples of any kind, immediately made a sconce of a skull, into the jaws of which he thrust his candle; then creeping gently to the instrument he had prepared, he took it up, and calmly waited the event.

The old woman, expecting to find the miser knee-deep in a hole of his own digging, was greatly surprised to see what appeared to be a dim light at a considerable depth. In fact, she was stooping down in the guise before mentioned, to reconnoitre more exactly, when our hero, on taking a glimpse of her, suddenly, and with considerable violence, elevated the death's head, so as mechanically and forcibly to clash with the old woman's living one. With a genuine and horrid yell, she fell backwards; meanwhile, the (for once) grinning miser held it up at arm's length, turning it about in all directions; for he knew not, precisely, on what point of the compass the old woman lay, taking care to keep himself as much out of sight as possible. Her shriek was succeeded by hysterical, half-laughing cries for some time, after which her accustomed mutter returned; when, with a sort of a grunt, she raised herself from the earth, and fled, as much frightened as the miser could possibly

wish; who, finding at last that the coast was clear, withdrew his tipstaff, and depositing it where he could readily obtain it again, upon any similar occasion, he took up his candle, and resumed his researches.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER having accurately examined the vault round the walls, the miser directed his attention, more particularly, to the parts contiguous to the aperture through which he had descended.

He found by inspection, that the part which had broken away with him, was by no means exactly under the situation of the stone that seemed to have been intended as a guide; and as it was a mere failure of the arch in consequence of his operations, it could not, of course, be considered as the intended entrance.

On removing a few more bricks, however, immediately over the nearest wall of the vault, he discovered a regularly formed square, filled by a single stone. After a little time he contrived to displace this, when a distinct apartment was discernible, the descent into which was provided for by a few vacancies and projections in the side; but it was not without some hazard of a fall and of extinguishing his light, that the old man contrived by those accommodations, to let himself safely

down. It was, he perceived, a very small room, constructed apparently for the reception of one inhabitant, as it was occupied by a single coffin, which was placed against the wall. This coffin, unlike the others, was quite entire, and richly ornamented; and among the various devices upon the lid, the miser happened to espy the effigies of two keys crossing each other. Now, a key was of all things, except money, the most interesting object to the miser that could be imagined; nay, it was in some views of it more agreeable to contemplate than unprotected coin, since it implied security as well as possession.

Although these were mere effigies, the miser felt strongly disposed to conjecture that they were intended to indicate the presence of valuables within. To obtain them, therefore, was his next object. But he soon found that being a stone chest, it was not quite so easy to gain access as into the decayed wooden one. There was not, however, the smallest hesitation in his mind as to making the attempt. He applied, therefore, all his strength, with indefatigable perseverance, in endeavouring to raise the lid. But, whether it was fastened down, or whether it was its own weight that detained it, he could not guess; in either case, the difficulty seemed one likely to try his patience; for after a whole day spent at it unremittingly, he had not made the least difference in the aspect of the business. It was now, therefore, time to set his brains to work; he always

found it very advantageous to tax his mind and his body alternately, when anything of this kind was to be done.

The coffin rested upon bearers, formed by ledges in the wall, which raised it about four feet from the ground. Now, it suddenly occurred to this straightforward genius, that the solidity and consequent weight of this impregnable bone-hutch, would prove its own destruction if he could contrive to tumble it down.

Without the smallest compunction therefore, but with considerable complacency, Ralph Richards, the miser, introduced a lever between the coffin and the wall, when he soon perceived the degree of obedience which usually results from the judicious application of that omnipotent engine. The coffin moved so decidedly at each pull, that he thought it prudent to take the upper hand of it, although he had not quite so good a situation for his exertions as before. He pulled and wedged, nevertheless, so satisfactorily, that the accomplishment of his purpose was rather unexpected, not to say a little alarming; for the old man's shins very narrowly escaped, when the coffin, with a tremendous force, descended.

The reader will feel, probably, much less anxious to become acquainted with the result of this experiment than the operator, who was greatly disappointed by the extinction of his light, which accompanied the coffin in its fall. He was, therefore, obliged to ascend as well as he could in entire darkness, and to descend into the

other vault, where he had placed his apparatus. Here, it was some time before he could find them, and still longer before he could succeed in using them. At last, however, another candle was lighted, and he returned to see what was to be seen.

The lid having flown off, and the coffin being turned partly on its side, a human body, by no means reduced to a skeleton, had rolled out, and lay extended upon the ground. It had been wrapped in a stiff cere-cloth, which still remained entire, except in a few places from which the sudden motion had removed it. The miser felt no inclination to decorticate this trunk, but proceeded very carefully to examine the floor upon which it had fallen, for something more suited to his taste, when close beside the body he espied a gold cross. He eagerly grasped it; but, as he attempted to withdraw it, the body suddenly started up, and the cross was as suddenly detained. Most submissively did the miser restore the gold to its owner, when the body quietly resumed its original position.

Seeing things were so, Ralph Richards felt considerably disposed to relinquish his enterprise; when he accidentally caught a glimpse of that which explained the mystery, at the same time that it made him amends for his fright; for he perceived a fine gold chain attached to the cross, which was passed round the neck of the deceased.

Although this accounted very satisfactorily for the cir-

cumstance, it was not without some hesitation, and a degree of tremulousness in his hand, that the miser proceeded to disengage the chain from its quiet possessor. He, however, obtained it without any further interruption, and felt that incomprehensible delight in the acquisition, which was strangely natural to his mind, and which it was incapable of deriving from any other source.

After a sufficiently minute search, he convinced himself that nothing more of value had been connected with the body. He, therefore, next directed his attention to the place which the coffin had occupied, and immediately discerned a small square chest, standing within a niche in the wall above it, alluded to in a Latin inscription upon the lid; but to this our hero was not indebted. He easily withdrew the box, but found that it was as firmly closed as the coffin had been. Here again the inscription would have aided him, had he been able or willing to consult it. He, however, resolved upon a similar expedient to that which had succeeded before, and accordingly threw the chest to the ground with all his force: when this had been repeated four or five times, the box flew open, and disclosed two heavy iron keys.

It is common enough to search for a key; but not quite so common, when that is obtained, to have to search for the lock. This business, however, employed the old man, patient and persevering as he was, much longer than was agreeable; particularly because he was

burning his precious candles, one after the other, apparently to no purpose. There was not a joint, a crack, a mark, or a speck in the arch above,—in the walls, or in the pavement, to which he did not pay as much attention as if he had been deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. Still there was nothing to be seen that bore the smallest resemblance to a doorway, a lid, or a key-hole. This was almost posing. The old man stood at last in the middle of the vault, giving a forlorn glance around, very nearly, as the phrase goes, "at his wit's end;" which was a point that he had never yet quite arrived at in all his emergencies.

It seemed very improbable, that his present general survey should reveal more to him than his very close and minute inspection had done; yet he could not easily prevail upon himself, with the keys in his hand, to give up the quest.

The corpse and the coffin he had removed a countless number of times, to examine the parts which they covered. Once more, however, he determined to move the coffin to the other side of the vault. In doing this, he chanced to set his foot upon one of the square flagstones upon which it had descended. This had by the blow been so far loosened, that the miser's weight slightly depressed one corner and raised the other. He thought there could be no harm in assisting it a little farther; and then discovered, that the pavement was double; the upper one consisting of comparatively

thin stones, which had been very carefully laid down, and fitted upon that beneath.

The first stone having been removed, the others followed with little difficulty. The miser then perceived an iron door about two feet square, neatly and evenly fitted into the surrounding floor; there was, moreover, a hole in it, corresponding in size and shape with the keys he possessed, and a large ring, resposing snugly in a hollow made to receive it. He delayed not to introduce one of the keys, which entered readily. He turned it, and had the satisfaction of hearing the bolt creak in its groove; then grasping the ring, he pulled it with all his might. The door, however, obeyed him not. Again he pulled, jerked, and rattled it; but still the door remained unmoved. "I'll rub a hole in ye, if you're a yard thick," muttered he, rapping the noiseless iron with his knuckles. He turned the key repeatedly, backwards and forwards, round and round, and could plainly hear the creaking of the bolt, as before. Once more he gave a hearty tug at the iron ring; when, not the door, but the ring gave way, and that so suddenly that the old man gave way too, who tumbled backwards, and again extinguished his light. Not at all disconcerted, however, our hero regained his feet with great alacrity; for he knew his head from his heels, notwithstanding the darkness.

There was the smallest glimmer of moonlight imaginable at this time, through the aperture at the top of the vault, which enabled Ralph Richards to find the

tinder-box; but not by the most systematic groping, could he lay hands upon his candle. Finding, at length, that it was hopeless to continue this search, he gave it up, and feeling his way up the side of the vault, emerged from this den of death.

It was a clear moonlight night, quite light enough for a luckless lass to see him, who was just then passing that part of the lane before mentioned, which lay nearest to the ruins.

Nobody knows how fast he can run until he has seen, or imagined he has seen, a ghost. With two steps the girl reached the hedge; and with one vigorous scramble she cleared it, and in an incredibly short time, with hair on end, and gothic mouth, she entered the village, and proceeded to the abode of Dame Trudge, who had by no means forgotten her own late encounter, which, however, she had not yet mentioned.

"Why, aye—drive the house down if ye be a mind," said the old woman, hastening to the door with accelerated steps, thinking it probable that the next announcement would start her bolts; "what do ye want o' me?" said she, opening it about two inches.

"Why, La! what do I want? why, you said I should be safe enough to go past the *owd chuch* to-night; but I'm hanged if I hāvn't seen a sight!"

"Well—seen a sight!—and what then?—so 've I, for that matter, and hope I shall again; what colour was it on?"

"Lawk, darkish-like, I count; but I didn't stand to look on't; for I give but two jumps, and scratched clean through the hedge, and here I am; and if ever I go 'crost there by dark again, I wish I may never come back no more—that's all:—you and your *tickut!* —tan't o' no more use than nothing at all, I won't believe, and you'll see if I don't talk on't too pretty well about."

"Well, I dare to say ye will—a fine thing to talk on! —ye see an owd horse go past, I shouldn't wonder, and he was as scared at you, as you was at he, I'm bound for't."

But the old woman's credit was shaken by this circumstance, in a way that it had never been before during the whole course of her practice; for a number of persons had now gathered round her door, who, taking courage from her comparative meekness of manner and weakness of argument, joined in with the girl's last speech.

"Well, don't bother me oot," said the old woman, at last, who suddenly pushed to her door, and bolted out the argument which she found herself quite incompetent to sustain with advantage: indeed, she had recently been so thoroughly frightened herself, that her usual nervous style of expressing her thoughts entirely forsook her.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the meantime, Ralph Richards, quite unconscious of the fright he had occasioned, returned quietly home; pleased, and yet disquieted, at what he had left behind him.

He had no doubt that this trap-door concealed the treasures of which he was in search, yet felt very uneasy at leaving it to the possibility of discovery by others, who might find much less difficulty in opening it than he had experienced. He, however, had little cause for fear on this ground, whatever he might have for hope; for beside that the ruins themselves were very rarely visited, the entrance to these vaults was in so obscure a part, and so hidden by the mass of rubbish at the mouth, that there was scarcely a possibility of its being known to any but himself and the old woman, and she was not likely to trouble him again at present. Moreover, the vaults were by no means badly guarded; for in such situations, dead men are much better sentinels than living ones.

Nevertheless, the miser resolved to return before dawn to the spot, to take possession, lest any one should save him the trouble. As he reflected upon the measures to be adopted for opening the iron door, he could not help admiring the ingenuity with which it had been concealed,

and felt an inclination to employ a similar security for his own valuables, as he was, of course, never without his fears on their account; but he afterwards improved upon this plan, as will be seen in the sequel.

Whilst the moon was yet shining into his den, the miser arose, reviewed and secured his hoards with complacency, hoping that he should shortly add something considerable to them; and after having provided himself with an iron instrument with which he had once been obliged to break open one of his own hutches, he set out towards the ruins.

When he reached the vault, he found that nothing had been disturbed in his absence. The presence of his quiet companion, the dead body, might have incommoded some, in such an undertaking as that in which he was engaged; though it neither threatened nor upbraided. But the miser felt no further inconvenience from it than resulted from the space that it occupied on the floor. To remedy this, therefore, he tumbled it into the coffin again, upon which he replaced the lid, and by this means obtained more room for his operations.

There was at this time just light enough from above for him to distinguish the trap-door, which now seemed to require the utmost exertion of his mental and bodily powers.

The ring being gone, there appeared at first no very ready means of raising it, supposing it had been at liberty. He was not long, however, in finding a sub-

stitute; for, by inserting the key and turning it a little, he obtained as good a hold as ever. He now perceived that the door was loosened, though not released, for the bolt rattled firmly against the adjoining stone which inclosed it. Vainly he turned the key time after time; it performed a complete revolution without any further influence upon the lock. Concluding, therefore, that the bolts had been overshot, he saw no alternative between laboriously forcing an entrance and abandoning his hopes and expectations altogether. As the latter was to him infinitely the greater evil of the two, he was not long in choosing the former, and therefore resolved to proceed, let the expense of time and strength be what it might; he, however, by no means deceived himself in estimating the difficulties before him, which were briefly these :—

The iron plate, or rather block, filled a space that was about large enough to admit a man's body. He could, in some measure, judge of its thickness by its weight; for the bolt allowed motion enough for him to raise it about a quarter of an inch; this, however, he had but just strength sufficient to do. The key entered nearly half its length before it turned, consequently the bolt could not be very near the surface. Moreover, the frame in which the door was inclosed appeared to be one solid mass of stone, upon which the sides of the vault were built. He could, therefore, only gain access by scraping a hole in the iron; by chipping away the stone till the

fastening was at liberty, or by introducing some instrument for the purpose of forcing the lock. The latter plan seemed to be the most feasible to begin with; for it was likely to be the soonest accomplished; if, indeed, it were practicable at all.

An obstacle in the way of an energetic mind, so far from weakening its force, causes an accumulation of power, which frequently becomes the means of overthrowing or of surmounting it. The miser's confidence of the existence of treasure on the other side of this trap-door seemed to increase with the apparent difficulty of obtaining it; so that his purpose, instead of being relaxed, was strengthened by a circumstance which would have completely extinguished it in the minds of almost any beside himself.

Ralph Richards soon found that no instrument that he could apply, had the least tendency to force the bolt or to raise the door. After nearly a day spent in contriving and introducing the most likely and unlikely mechanical agents, and working in the most patient and cunning manner, all things remained as they were—there was the door, there was the lock, there was the key, and, more than all, the miser firmly believed, there was the money.

He had tried the most gentle and the most violent methods that could be imagined, excepting a hog's bristle or half a pound of gunpowder, the first of which is said to have been applied in a similar case

with instant success by one, after the most crafty and insinuating instruments had been employed in vain by others; and the latter is certainly a drastic medicine, capable of simplifying intestinal intricacies, and of removing obstructions, wherever it is administered. As neither of these methods, however, occurred to the present operator, he was obliged to abandon all attempts upon the lock, and proceed to the very laborious business of chipping away the stone until the bolt should be exposed and released. This plan, if persisted in, was doubtless certain of succeeding, and demanded little apparently but muscular exertion; yet it requires considerable mental energy to command the continuance of long protracted bodily labour under such circumstances.

As it was now quite dark in this vault, the miser was obliged to postpone further proceedings until the next morning, when, having furnished himself with the best instrument his stores afforded, he betook himself to the ruins.

Unfortunately, it was only when there was broad daylight above that there was not midnight beneath; so that, being nearly winter, there were but a few hours in the day when the vault was not in total darkness. When he now entered, the miser could scarcely perceive the trap-door itself, much less the precise spot upon which it would be advisable to commence his operation. Nevertheless, after a time he could just distinguish

enough to make a beginning; he therefore seated himself in as commodious a position as he could, and with the mallet and chisel set to work.

CHAPTER IX.

THE miser had operated with unwearied application for nearly two months upon the stone, and had scarcely penetrated through one-tenth part of the substance which must be removed before the door could be freed from its confinement. The mere labour, however, gave him little concern; but the dread of discovery in his operations, and fears for the safety of his hoards at home, were worms at his heart, gnawing as incessantly as his own chisel, the progress of which was greatly impeded by these apprehensions; for, in order to make as little noise as possible, he was obliged to deal his blows with less than half his strength; so that the labour of a week was hardly perceptible: again, as he was very anxious that it should not be thought he had deserted his dwelling, or was continually absent from it, he was compelled frequently to leave his work and show himself, or be ready to show himself, at his old haunts.

But there was another inconvenience greater than either of these to which his economical habits subjected him in the present instance, and that was, the want of

light. He had, as we have seen, procured candles to aid him at first in his researches, and had used one occasionally in his operations upon the lock; when, however, he found that it would be requisite to dig through the stone, he resolutely extinguished his taper, since the expense of continuing it would have rendered the present far too hazardous a speculation; for it was a rule with him in all methods of obtaining money, never to put a penny in jeopardy if he could possibly avoid it.

He contented himself, therefore, with lighting his candle as often as he wished to ascertain the progress of his labours, and he found not unfrequently that the efforts of a whole day had been fruitlessly expended, by his chisel having wandered to a part upon which it was by no means needful to operate. Without wasting more time, however, in useless regret, when he discovered such a deviation, he transferred his tool to the right spot, and at last acquired the habit of retaining it there more permanently.

He was not troubled and hindered with a single grain of that impatience which is continually outrunning the slow progress of circumstances, and which, being obliged to return to the same situation in the course, feels consequent exhaustion and disappointment. Nor was he, as we have seen, apt to be discouraged with fears for the result. Had he perpetually entertained doubts as to the possibility of his being able eventually to accomplish his purpose, or had he felt much uncertainty as to the benefit

likely to accrue, it is likely that he never *would* have accomplished it; for any degree of despondency would have abstracted just so much available impulse from each of the countless strokes to be administered as might have rendered them all useless. He knew that the inconceivably small impression made by a single drop of water was yet not *so* small but that a succession of them would in the course of time effect that which he was endeavouring to achieve with hard iron.

The same things appear easy or difficult according to those beside which they are placed. If, instead of comparing his exertions with the dropping of water, the miser had continually tantalized his mind with an idea of the speedy aid which a blacksmith's tools would have afforded, his present means must have appeared, and therefore would probably have been, entirely inadequate to his task.

Ralph Richards was not troubled with any vacillations of opinion as to the best plan to be adopted, but adhered steadily to that which he at first conceived to be the most likely to prosper; he continued, therefore, at his employment, in calm expectation of eventual success, knowing that impatience has longer to wait than perseverance; nevertheless, it is certain that he would have been quite as well pleased if the trap-door had opened readily to his hand, or, at any rate, if the stone had been only half the thickness that he found it to be.

But that which encouraged his soul and seemed to invigorate his body was the smell of the gold, of which he appeared to have an instinctive perception, even though separated from it by cast-iron or stone walls. He had apparently some organic power, similar to that possessed by the camel, who is conscious of its approach to water fifty miles before it reaches it. Or perhaps, by having made a couch of a chest of gold for more than half a century, he had acquired a magnetic sympathy with the precious metals which apprised him of their presence when within a certain distance.

These perceptions or qualities of his mind had probably availed him frequently in his former life, and had perhaps enabled him to accumulate the greater part of that which he possessed; for it is generally the case, that beings whose desires or necessities point exclusively or peculiarly to one object, have some exclusive and peculiar faculties which enable them to obtain it. A crow feeling a particular interest in the demise of an aged horse, has organs of such delicate sensibility that they almost instantly inform him of the event, and thereby he has an opportunity of showing his regard by assisting at its obsequies.

The miser had imagined when he first discovered this trap-door that it was the lid of a chest in which the treasure was deposited. He perceived, however, occasionally, as he struck his tool, something hollow in the sound, which, though very indistinct, was yet sufficient

to induce a suspicion that this was the entrance of some passage or vault, which might have to be explored before the gold could be obtained.

He could not avoid, notwithstanding the solidity of the stone upon which he was engaged, feeling somewhat anxious lest his introduction to the mysteries of the place should be as precipitate and unceremonious as on a former occasion; and he was fully aware that there was nothing to guarantee his descending as safely, much less as commodiously, as he did then. Finding, however, that it would be impossible to continue his operations if he placed himself so as to avoid accompanying the floor if it should travel, he did not suffer the apprehension to deter him; but as he could not prevent the worst, set himself to hope for the best.

Thus day after day, and week after week, he continued at his work, during which time no circumstance occurred to interrupt him, but his visits to his own home, which he generally made at night, to avoid observation; from this, however, since his adventure with Dame Trudge, he had been perfectly free.

CHAPTER X.

Most wofully did the poor old man's back ache with his long continued and incommodious position, and most lamentably cold was the stone upon which he sat.

These inconveniences, however, he did not suffer to interrupt him in his work. His own most dutiful and serviceable members had been long educated in the doctrine of active as well as passive obedience; nor could anything short of probable injury to them, by which they might be incapacitated for future labour, induce him to remit any portion of the task that he destined them to perform; but, although he could thus command the continued services of his body to an almost indefinite extent, he could not do so exactly by the tool with which he wrought.

This instrument, from incessant use and the frequent obtusion and necessary renewal of the edge (which he effected with no small labour on the stone itself), had at last become so short and thick as to be nearly useless. This was a more disagreeable circumstance to the miser than if he had abridged or amputated a thumb or a finger, because he had others of them in reserve; whereas this chisel or wedge was the only thing of the kind that he possessed, and he was well aware that he could not procure another without expense and hazard. Nevertheless, he found at length that it was impossible to proceed further with his present instrument, and, seeing no other alternative, he resolved on the ensuing day to procure another.

Among all the sacrifices that this self-denying old man was willing to make in the furtherance of his present designs, it is certain that money, even to the

smallest amount, would never have been one, had it not been for the gold cross and chain that he had already obtained, and which he knew would indemnify him for twenty times the expense likely to be incurred; but being thus amply secured from loss, he felt less difficulty in obtaining his own consent to abstract a small portion of coin from his coffers.

In order, if possible, to transact this business without interruption or observation, he resolved to proceed to a town at some distance from that in which he was known, and where he was likely to meet with friendly greetings.

Having reached this place unnoticed, he was congratulating himself upon his good luck in that respect, and was turning over the old iron of a broker's sundry-box, secure, as he thought, from remark, when Dame Trudge stood before him, who, unknown to our hero, usually took this town in her morning's walk.

"Aye!—what *owd* grope!" said she, in a loud tone of surprise and exultation; "what o' the name o' good-luck can ye be after here? What, have ye chuck'd a penny 'mongst *th' owd* iron?—ye pretty well sick o' ye job hinder, I reckon."

The miser remained silent, according to his usual custom, and sought the more obscure regions of the shop, whither the old woman, he conceived, had no pretence for following him; she, however, could still make herself heard.

"Aye—well—'twas, as I said, within a little. I thowght ye should git enow o' what ye was pok'n arter, —ye got your fill for once, if ye never hain't afore;"—continued the old woman, who had no doubt that the miser had been served with the same entertainment as herself. Ralph Richards, however, remained silent, till his ingenious tormentor at last said something that almost made him howl.

"Aye—well—ye've swallowed ye tong, for want of a muff'l o' wittls,—'shoon't wonder;—so rummage th'owd stuff about for a hook to fetch it up agin: only have a care I an't home first, and then 'tis a chance if I don't rummage over some o' yar rusty guineas; f'r all your keys, and f'r all yar owd bones can do o' running arter me."

Truly, if the witch and the miser had made a race of it and started fair, it is difficult to say which *would* have been in first, for they were both pretty evenly matched as to activity; though it is probable that the regular pedestrian habits of the former would have given the latter a tight pull for it. Ralph Richards, however, was by no means disposed to enter the lists with Dame Trudge on this occasion in any such way; but instantly concluding his purchase, he bargained with a man who was driving by in a cart for a corner in his vehicle.

This was one of those instances which showed how completely the miser's inclinations were in subjection to his judgment; for had they been consulted, he

would much sooner have crawled twenty times the distance upon his hands and knees than have paid a farthing for a conveyance.

The manœuvre was transacted with such incredible dispatch that the old woman had not time for a word, and was in danger of swallowing *her* tongue with astonishment.

"Well! if ye be a mind for a ride, set off with ye—y'onaccountable owd crittur!" said she at last, staring after the cart with all her eyes; "but if I an't as good as my word yet, my name an't Trudge, and if I b'an't too many for ye now," continued the old woman, who was convinced from the sudden alarm of the miser that his gold was not quite so secure as she had before supposed.

In the meantime our hero was jogging on in the cart at a round trot, and at times was within a little of jogging *off;* for it was as much as he could possibly do to keep his seat; this being the first time within his own remembrance that he had travelled by any other conveyance than his legs afforded him.

He soon found himself at the spot where he had intended to alight, when, having paid the stipulated sum, he descended. But if the miser found it difficult before to keep his seat, he found it more difficult now to keep his legs; for had he, like the earth, travelled in a circle, and kept spinning round upon his own centre all the time, he could not have felt a more alarming vertigo in

his whirling brain than at present. After two or three lateral, and even backward strides and telegraphic extensions of his arms, which were rather directed by instinct than his own volitions, he contrived to maintain his perpendicular with less alarming inclinations, and before he reached his own dwelling had nearly regained his wonted steadiness of deportment.

He now set about making more secure arrangements for his treasures, and for this purpose he dug a hole in the earth large enough to receive them, in the most hidden and remote part of his cave, and having carefully replaced the earth over them, he secured the entrance as usual, and returned to the ruins.

His new instrument had so much more of the gift of penetration than his former one that it effected more in a few days than the other had done in several weeks; but still he had millions of blows to deal and much fatigue to endure.

There would, however, be little benefit or amusement in accompanying him in every stroke of his mallet during his very tedious operations; indeed, had they lasted a thousand years, the narrative could scarcely be made to occupy so long a time as that which relates the circumstance of Columbus cracking the egg.

Suffice it to say, then, that *in process of time* he had the satisfaction to perceive, upon a careful examination of his work, that he had really arrived at the bolt; the end of which now lay completely exposed to his view:

having fairly chipped away all the intervening stone that had secured it. Nothing, therefore, now remained but to raise the door, which he immediately proceeded to do, by introducing the key as before.

It will be remembered that when he first applied one of these keys it revolved and moved the bolt, but not far enough to release it from its confinement; and that afterwards the key circulated, without any further influence upon it, in consequence of which he undertook the laborious task which he had now happily accomplished.

Having found one key only of the two that would turn at first, it did not occur to him to apply the other when this failed to operate. By mere accident, however, now he chanced to introduce the second key, not caring which, as he merely needed its assistance in lieu of the broken ring. But who can express the very peculiar feelings of his mind when, happening to turn this key, he found that the bolt readily followed it, as it had the other key at first, and that by this second movement the bulky mass of iron was entirely removed from all contact with the stone, being now snugly contained in the lock itself.

CHAPTER XI.

"WELL and so! sir?"—Why, sir, the miser did not waste time in useless regret; but calmly brushed away the chips of stone, which bore testimony to the millions

of blows that he had unnecessarily expended in producing them. But he was not without a conjecture that this his needless labour had been alluded to in the words "dig in vain," in which case he thought, "dig and obtain," might now be fulfilled.

With this hope he once more set about raising the said iron door, after having prepared a light. He accordingly pulled it carefully but forcibly by the key; when he soon perceived that all difficulties were really removed; for, notwithstanding that once or twice its great weight caused it to resume its original position, he succeeded at last in elevating and throwing it back. He then knelt down, and holding his candle as far in as he could reach, saw plainly that this was no money chest, but a dark, and for what he knew, an illimitable void, black as midnight itself. It was indeed so uninviting that the miser assumed a less forward position, and leaned over a little more carefully; he then introduced a few pieces of the stone chips, which informed him that it was not at any rate a bottomless abyss. Encouraged by this, he lowered his candle by means of a shred of his drapery a little further, and at length discerned under the floor, and against one side, something like a series of narrow steps or ledges, which descended steeply and in a straight direction as far as his dim light could exhibit them.

As Ralph Richards did not feel altogether disposed to explore this gulf, without some definite idea of its

termination, he procured a bunch of straw from above, and setting fire to a part of it, threw it in; but he gained little information from this experiment at first, for the flame was almost instantly extinguished; and it was not until he had repeated it a number of times that it survived till it reached the bottom, and it then burned so feebly and for so short a time that he could scarcely form a judgment as to the depth of the dungeon.

Here, then, was something more to be done before this well-hidden gold could be obtained. The miser drew a deliberate breath, very much like a sigh, as he looked into this uncertain profundity. Although there appeared to be the means of descent provided, they were so extremely steep and narrow, and that nearest to the top was so nearly under the floor of the vault he now occupied, that it could scarcely be obtained without considerable danger of a fall. The miser, therefore, eyed it with the most careful attention for a long time; continually changing his position, so as to gain a view in all possible aspects; frequently varying the elevation of his candle and of his own head; using all that circumspection that a fly will often exhibit when at the orifice of a bottle, going from side to side, now venturing his head in and now taking it out again, till at last he resolves to descend,—and so did the miser, after the most mature and deliberate consideration; reflecting that the steps, incommodious as they were, had evidently been intended as the means of descent, and therefore could

hardly be really impracticable; and, moreover, their existence plainly indicated something of importance to which doubtless they conducted.

With these persuasions our hero prepared to introduce his nether half into the aperture. Having seated himself upon the edge, his legs first entered the gloom. He then most warily slid down the more weighty and important parts of his body, describing diligently a multitude of intersecting circles with his toes and his heels, in order to encounter some projections upon which to place them. He had at the same time quite enough to do with every faculty and function appertaining to that moiety of his material substance which still remained above. His arms and his elbows had a most onerous and momentous charge, as upon them only he now depended for support. One hand was occupied with that indispensable article a candle, and the other firmly grasped the rope which he had made fast to the iron door, while his vigilant brains superintended the board of works.

At last, by a most inconvenient extension of his left leg in a lateral direction, he gained an acquaintance with one corner of the uppermost step. It was, however, so far removed from the perpendicular which a mathematician would have drawn through his body, that he could transfer but a small portion of his weight to it, and therefore could little relieve his uneasy and impatient elbows. In fact, they at last acted upon their

own account, and so far betrayed him that he suddenly found he had only his head and shoulders above ground. Happily this movement enabled him to obtain a more firm footing below, by which means he had one hand at liberty. With this he introduced the candle, and could now just see enough to guide in reaching the steps completely. He found them constructed so as to make the progress down them a possibility, and nothing more; they were each little less than two feet in height, and were such narrow ledges that it required all his care to retain his footing, while the inconvenient distance to which he was obliged to protrude one foot downwards before the other could be released, made him apprehensive, continually, that the rest of the journey must be accomplished without their assistance. The old man could not help glancing at the trap-door, which was lessening above him every step he descended, with increasing interest, almost amounting to anxiety; at the same time that the side of the steps next the unexplored and unfathomed dungeon demanded the most assiduous watchfulness.

He had descended about a dozen of these steps, when he perceived that they were no longer necessary, for a narrow raised gallery now presented itself which ran along the wall beside him; this proceeding horizontally could, of course, be trodden in the usual way, and was a great relief to the miser while it lasted, which, however, was not long. He presently came to a

small arched doorway, in which was inserted a well-fitted door. He began to fear that here was another difficulty similar to that which he had experienced above. But for once he was agreeably disappointed; for at the first effort the door crumbled to dust at his feet, and disclosed a lone vaulted passage, of whose extent he could at present, of course, form no conjecture.

As hitherto neither earth, water, stone, nor iron; ghosts, witches, frights, falls, coffins, nor skull-bones; the living nor the dead; wind, rain, nor midnight, had been able to make our hero relinquish his purpose, it was not likely that he would long wait before an open door. Nevertheless, he *did* wait some time before he entered; for, as real difficulties vanish, imaginary ones sometimes arise.

He was now at a very considerable distance below the surface of the earth, the ascent to which could not on any emergency be accomplished without delay and difficulty. He could not help feeling some uneasiness at the *possibility* of the trap-door above being discovered and closed upon him. The place through which the gallery ran upon which he now stood was so poorly illumined by his candle, that he could yet form no idea of its size or construction, or of the depth below him. But if the extent of this apartment was nearly unknown, that of the narrow passage before him was quite so, which he had no means of ascertaining but by himself exploring it; this, however, it is probable he would not

so long have hesitated to do, had not a cause, of which he was quite ignorant, already operated upon his bodily feelings, which had insensibly influenced his mind and relaxed its powers. Nevertheless, he proceeded a few steps into this place, but with a tremulousness to which he was little accustomed.

His candle now became excessively dim, the flame having assumed an unusually slender form, giving at the same time a strangely pale and lurid light; at the next step it lengthened still more, and scarcely appeared to touch the wick, being at times entirely withdrawn and hovering over it. The old man now felt an insupportable sensation of internal oppression: his head became confused; the flickering and attenuated flame he now imagined to be a distant spectre; it at length slowly retired from the candle, and vanished. The miser gazed an instant at the red smouldering wick; dropped it, and with a convulsive effort forced himself back to the entrance. He then sunk down, and became completely insensible.

CHAPTER XII.

"Am I Giles Jenkins, or am I not?"

ONCE more, after a most perilous escape, our immortal hero began to recover the use of his faculties. The few hurried steps by which, at the moment his senses were

forsaking him, he was enabled to quit the passage, saved his life; for the dungeon into which this movement brought him had been in a considerable degree purified from its noxious vapours by the opening of the trap-door, and the atmosphere had been further remedied by the fire that he had introduced. Had he known how accurately the flame of his candle indicated the poisonous quality of the air, he would instantly have withdrawn upon perceiving its dimness. When Ralph Richards first opened his eyes, he was unable to account in any satisfactory way for his situation. He was, it is needless to state, in perfect darkness. The dim light of the vault above him was scarcely sufficient to render the trap-door itself visible, and of course there was not a ray in his present apartment. The question of personal identity had never before puzzled his brain; but now, whether he was Ralph Richards in his own cave, or a toad in a block of marble, he scarcely knew. Whether he had been hanged or drowned, and was now dead and buried, were questions which it was a hard matter for his bewildered and unassisted brain to answer. Gradually, however, he rallied his scattered thoughts; and his first drowsy hypothesis, that he had locked himself up in one of his own hutches and mislaid the key, was by degrees corrected, until his real circumstances occurred to his recollection. It required, however, the utmost exertion of his newly-recovered powers, both of body and mind, safely to extricate himself from his present very awkward

circumstances; for he was now upon that narrow raised gallery which formed the communication between the steps and the arched way from whence he had recently escaped. He raised his head and shoulders gently, and supported himself, sphynx-fashion, for some time, while, by feeling, he informed himself on which side was the wall and on which the dungeon. Having done this, he moved very slowly and cautiously along, a little after the example of a caterpillar; until he felt the lowest of the steps, when he was just able to discern the trap-door above him. The sight of this effectually rectified all remaining confusion and uncertainty: it therefore now required only time and care, neither of which he spared when they were needed, to ascend into the upper vault, and from thence to gain that most charming country, the land of the living.

It may be thought unlikely, that after this last adventure the miser should have any remaining inclination to proceed further in his subterranean investigations. The fact was, however, that he was entirely ignorant of the danger he had escaped. All he could recollect of the circumstances above related was this, that he had dropped his candle, and he supposed, from finding himself in the situation described, that he had afterwards fallen asleep. That he should have done so at such a time and in such a place, seemed strange; but it seemed also undeniable. How long he had lain, he was, of course, quite unable to conjecture; but judging

from the imperious demands within, he was induced to believe that no business had been transacted there for several days.

Having sparingly administered to the importunities of his body, he felt as much as ever disposed to gratify the more insatiate cravings of his mind. Food and fresh air had done wonders for him, in restoring his wonted strength and spirits, so that he felt as able and willing as ever to resume his labours.

Once more, therefore, he repaired to the ruins and descended into the vault; when, having again prepared a light, he entered at the trap-door, and proceeded down the steps as before.

When he reached the low-browed arched doorway, he involuntarily halted an instant; for a strange association of indistinct reminiscences crowded upon his mind at this spot, which impressed him with an indefinite idea of danger. With a penetrating eye, therefore, an attentive ear, and a keen scent, he endeavoured to ascertain the safety of each step that lay before him. The peril, however, was here inconsiderable now; for owing to the access of external air through the open doorway, the atmosphere of this passage, near the entrance, was so far improved as to have little effect either upon himself or his candle. Finding, therefore, nothing in his way, the miser stepped carefully along this unfrequented alley, surveying attentively the wall on each side of him as he went, for some new doorway or hidden

recess. It however continued straight and unvaried for some length. The only difference was, that as he proceeded, the arch became narrower and lower, so that he was obliged to stoop inconveniently, and at last to descend to his hands and knees. This position was much less agreeable, and the air at this part began to partake of the qualities that had before arrested him; but he was himself unconscious of anything at present but a peculiar smell, which he rightly enough attributed to the long-imprisoned damps of the place.

How much further he might have proceeded with impunity it is impossible to say; but it is probable that causes similar to those which before operated upon him, would finally and speedily have terminated his adventures, had not a very decided obstacle suddenly presented itself; for a quantity of loose earth and bricks, which completely filled the passage, informed him that the arch had here fallen in.

As he was quite ignorant of his danger in penetrating further among the deadly vapours of the place, he was far from congratulating himself upon this obstruction. He had, of course, no means of ascertaining the extent or quantity of the ruins before him; but he saw enough to convince him, that their removal would be a long and most laborious operation. The distance from this spot to the entrance was very considerable, and the lowness of the arch, which obliged him to crawl more than half the way, would render any kind of burthen extremely

inconvenient. There was little possibility of varying the aspect of the business, or of becoming more acquainted with it by a thousand years' consideration than he could in five minutes; in the course of which time, therefore, he made his determination, arranged his plans, and set about the execution of them.

For this purpose he immediately retraced his steps, ascended into the upper vault, and from thence bent his way homeward. When he arrived at his dwelling, he carefully displaced the contents of a strong chest, of a portable size, and having found other accommodation for these valuables, took the hutch under his arm, and returned to the ruins.

Our hero consoled himself in the prospect of what he had now to accomplish, by the encouraging consideration that the crumbling mass of earth and bricks would yield more readily to his endeavours than that upon which he had lately expended so many weary blows; for six yards of this would be more easily penetrated than six inches of stone.

It was evident that this stoppage was purely accidental, and could never have been intended by those who had constructed these subterranean recesses. The trap-door, so well concealed by the pavement over it, seemed perfectly sufficient for all purposes of security, without any further disguise or impediment; at the same time that the two keys, preserved and yet hidden with so much care, together with the other indications, ren-

dered it impossible to believe that nothing important was connected with them.

With these convictions, therefore, our indefatigable hero once more buckled to. Having lowered himself and his box into the vault, his first uneasy apprehension was, that the latter would not enter the aperture through which it was needful for it to pass. It, however, filled the trap-doorway so exactly, that only a little urging was required to force it through. Ralph Richards was very carefully assisting it for this purpose, intending to retain his hold of it until himself could follow; when a trifling diminution in its size toward the uppermost end released it so suddenly, that it eluded his grasp, and accomplished the remainder of the journey without either his aid or direction, of which in due time it gave him audible demonstration.

This was by no means an amusing incident to our hero, for to this box he had looked as to the only feasible machine he could procure for the removal of the obstruction in the passage; indeed, without it, or something of the kind, it would be nearly impossible to displace a bushel of the mass in six months, since the position upon hands and knees, which it was necessary to assume, would leave no other vehicle but his mouth at liberty for its reception.

This being the case, he thought it would be advisable to take some measures for the recovery of the hutch; which had returned a sound of that kind, that he con-

ceived would not have proceeded from it, had the fall occasioned a complete disruption of its parts. He therefore procured a light, and attaching it to one end of his very serviceable rope, entered the trap-door, and descending the steps, planted himself upon the gallery to reconnoitre.

Having fixed his candle so as to remain in an upright position, he let it down gently from the spot upon which he stood, into this incomprehensible gulf. It was, however, of very little service in revealing the mysteries of the place. The size of this dungeon, and the darkness of its walls, blackened by the moisture that was continually exuding from them, rendered it impossible by the means of his dim candle to gain any idea of its size or construction. As, however, this was not his object, it was enough for him to discern, after the light had descended to the utmost extent of his rope, that the box was lying quietly under it.

His first endeavour was to hook it up; but this he soon found was a vain attempt. He saw, therefore, that there was no probable way of obtaining it, but by descending himself into the dungeon; but this required consideration; for as there were no means of descent provided, it would, he was aware, be far better to abandon this hutch, needful as it was to the accomplishment of his task, than to incur the hazard of falling a distance of fifteen or twenty feet, and of spending the rest of his days in this retirement.

But upon a closer examination of that part of the wall into which the further end of the gallery was built, it appeared that time, or some other cause, had here and there displaced a stone or widened a crevice, so that with the aid of his rope there could be little difficulty or danger in descending.

Having convinced himself of this, he fastened one end of the rope to an iron hinge of the broken door, which was close at hand, and carefully disengaging himself from the gallery, in due time reached the bottom. The first thing, however, that his foot encountered was a moveable substance, which was speedily broken by his pressure. On examination, he found a human skeleton lying in a position that plainly indicated its having fallen from above. The miser perceived this instantly, and felt a momentary qualm at his present situation, which was only relieved by the rope that he still held, and which he felt strangely unwilling to relinquish.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE persons who had concerned themselves in the history and antiquities of these ruins, would have paid Ralph Richards something considerable to have told all he knew of their subterranean apartments; that especially into which he had now entered would have greatly

interested the sentimental *virtuosi* of the neighbourhood. It was a place of that kind which was an important convenience a few ages ago, being a keep, or dungeon; an apartment provided for the reception of those who might be troublesome in any other situation.

It was clear that the bones upon which the miser had set his foot were the remains of one who had been imprisoned in this place. A large iron ring still encircled one wrist and one ancle. A chain composed of a few massy links remained hanging from the opposite side, and the last link of the chain appeared to have been divided, by grinding it against a projecting angle of the wall, which bore evident marks of the operation. The hopes and fears that urged this attempt, and the vivid spark of joy that attended its success, were, doubtless, speedily extinguished by the fall which had caused his death; a termination, however, less terrible probably than the one that had been anticipated.

There was only one thing in this place that attracted the miser's attention particularly, and that was a small door, placed at some height in the wall, and to which a few narrow steps ascended.

It was, as might have been expected, firmly secured in its place by bolts, that could only be removed on the other side. It appeared to be one solid stone, fitted into, and hanging in a case or frame of iron, of sufficient strength to support its own enormous weight when it was opened. The miser sounded it with his

knuckles repeatedly; but this experiment indicated the same degree of solidity as any part of the wall, through which, therefore, it would have been equally easy to have carved a passage. He therefore descended the steps from this door, and taking his candle round the dungeon, carefully surveyed every part. There was, however, not the smallest vacancy or variation in the walls beside, nor was there anything upon the floor but the dusty remains of what had probably been the prisoner's couch in one corner. Having made these observations, and remarked the height of the gallery above him, from which, as has been mentioned, no means of descent were provided, the miser was convinced that this place was no otherwise connected with the object he had in view than as it afforded a communication for a short space between the steps under the trap-door and the vaulted passage.

Feeling quite satisfied with this persuasion, he fastened the depending end of the rope to the hutch, which, like its owner, seemed to be formed of indestructible materials, being quite uninjured by its fall. He then achieved his ascent, though not without difficulty and frequent apprehensions of an event which might add his bones to those of the skeleton beneath him. He however, reached the gallery again in safety, when he drew up the box, with no further incident or impediment.

He had now to commence his labours in the narrow

passage by proceeding to remove the earth and rubbish that obstructed it. There was a question, however, occurred at first starting, between his economy and his convenience, in which it required some resolution to determine in favour of the former: the point to be decided was, whether or not to allow himself a light.

Here was a very tedious operation to be performed in an uncouth subterranean passage, leading he knew not where, at rather an anxious distance from the surface of the earth; the communication with which lay over a narrow unprotected gallery, and subsequently ascended a most incommodious series of narrow steps, having the before-mentioned dungeon twenty feet below him. A chandelier with ten tiers of sconces, in this place, would have been scarcely sufficient to afford the illustration that he needed.

On the other hand, the business that he was about to commence might occupy him a week, a month, or seven years, it was impossible to say which; but from the nature of the case it was not to be hoped that the mass which now filled the way, could very speedily be disposed of. The constant use of a light during one week would consume more candles than the miser could at any rate obtain his own consent to purchase; besides which, he could not hope to procure them without attracting an inconvenient degree of attention to his concerns. Again he reflected, that having gained the entrance of the passage, he could not possibly lose his

way or overshoot his mark; he thought, moreover, that there would be no great difficulty in moving, filling, and emptying the chest, the contents of which the capacious dungeon below would conveniently receive, and by which means (though the thought did not occur to him as an inducement) the naked bones of its present inhabitant would receive decent burial. His reasoning powers therefore resolved unanimously, that it would be practicable and expedient to transact this business, for the most part, without a light; but that it would be desirable and allowable to use one occasionally.

Having come to this conclusion, which was arrived at in much less time than has been occupied in recording it, Ralph Richards deemed the commencement of his operations a fit occasion for the temporary assistance of the candle which was now lighted in his hand; he therefore retained it at present, and entered the passage, drawing the box slowly after him.

The air of this place was now so far improved, that no inconvenience was likely to arise to the miser from his continuance in it. This was an advantage of which, of course, he was quite ignorant, as he knew nothing of his recent peril. The only difference of which he was conscious was this, that his candle burned more clearly, and that the air was less offensive than before.

The old man heaved something like a sigh as he approached that part of the archway which obliged him to stoop, and afterwards to crawl upon hands and knees.

Having reached the spot, he proceeded to fill his hutch with the first loose fragments that presented themselves, and was concerned to perceive that the quantity it contained, though sufficient to make it very weighty and unwieldy, did not perceptibly diminish the mass from which it was taken.

He found upon actually commencing, that there were several practical inconveniences and impediments which he had not anticipated. The road was here so narrow that it was quite impossible for the chest to pass him in any way, consequently he was obliged to let it precede him, and then to reach over it at his arm's length whilst he filled it. When this was done, he found it needful to retrograde for a considerable distance, under which disadvantage it was by no means easy to make his loaded vehicle follow him. In time, however, he drew it to that part of the passage which permitted him to take the other side of it, when he was able to push it before him. At last he reached the end of his journey, when he precipitated the contents of his box into the dungeon; but for which convenience he must have borne it up the steps into the vault, and perhaps ultimately have taken it to the surface, a labour that would have given quite another aspect to his undertaking.

Having completed this first journey and made himself acquainted with the measures to be adopted in the next, and after taking a most minute survey of the exact spot at which he was to rid himself of his load, every motion

requisite for which he deeply impressed upon his memory, our economical and resolute hero extinguished his light.

There was now only one of the five points through which the mind, by means of the body, is capable of being apprized of external circumstances, that could be of any available benefit to the miser, which was the sense of feeling; so that in this respect as well as in his employment, he bore a greater analogy than usual to that species of worms amongst which misers are by moralists usually classed.

It was, he found, a pure effort of memory, as soon as the light was extinguished, to inform him which part of the passage lay inwards, and which outwards, and there be some puzzle-brained geniuses, who might have made a fatal error in the decisions upon this important point. Not so Ralph Richards. He remembered distinctly, that the dungeon was on his right hand, and that his course must now be directed to his left. Thither, therefore, he groped his way, and at length was informed, by his further progress being suddenly checked, that he had arrived at the right place.

He soon found that it would take more than twice the time to fill his box in the dark than it had occupied him in the light; for the earth and fragments which he removed did not all enter the chest, but some fell on one side, owing partly to the inconvenient position in which he was obliged to operate; nevertheless, he obtained a load at last, and proceeded on his way.

They who have observed an ant tugging at a grain of earth or food, in the narrow passage leading to its habitation, may form a pretty correct idea of the miser's labours in the present instance; but as that industrious insect is urged by natural instinct to the accomplishment of a useful purpose, and the miser is impelled to his task by the absurd requirements of a disordered brain, the comparison is greatly in favour of the former.

When the old man had reached that part of the way which allowed him to rise, he slackened his pace, and at the first moment of anticipating the dungeon placed himself between it and his load, thinking thus to feel the part where the precipice commenced, lest otherwise his lading, cart and all, should descend. But upon second thoughts, he resumed his former situation, and even permitted the hutch to precede him and take its chance, since in case of an accident it would probably take less injury than himself.

He therefore drove his sledge before him; but with so much care and hesitation towards the last, that it scarcely moved an inch at each impulse. He knew that this was the most hazardous part of the business to be transacted in the dark, and was not without considerable anxiety for the result of this first experiment. He therefore halted when he imagined that the end could not be far distant, and prudently extended his hands along the floor as far as he could reach, but could feel no termination whatever. In this way he proceeded,

expecting his journey's end long before he arrived at it. At last, however, when he began to imagine that the passage had been supernaturally lengthened, a sudden tilt of his vehicle informed him that it was high time to direct its motions.

This was a very delicate operation to be performed under such circumstances; for the chest with its contents was so heavy, that it required a great effort to guide and retain it when off its balance, in doing which, it was as much as he could do to preserve his own. Had both been to descend, the business might have been very speedily accomplished; but this would have materially disconcerted the miser's arrangements. In due time he heard the rubbish begin to rattle upon the dead man's bones, and took all imaginable care that the living man's should not rattle among them.

There would be little more amusement in attending our hero through his present undertaking than while carving his way through the flag-stones. We shall therefore take it for granted that he has not been idle, if we observe the progress of his labours, when for his own information he employs a candle occasionally as he proposed.

At the end of the first day, or rather at the end of the first fast (for day and night were pretty nearly alike to him here), he produced a light and examined his work. He then observed that he had cleared about a yard of the passage, by nearly fifty journeys.

As he was making his observations, and applying the candle closely to every part of the ruins before him, for which purpose he had introduced his head into the furthest nook that was capable of receiving it, he was a little startled by the slight but sudden pressure of something that touched his shoulder behind. The miser started up and looked about him, but there was neither anything, nor anybody, to be seen; indeed, he thought it highly improbable that there should be, and seeing no cause, began to doubt the fact, and endeavoured to persuade himself that he had been deceived; for he who will believe nothing but what he can immediately account for, must sometimes discredit his own senses. Ralph Richards therefore resumed his examinations,—until darkness, death, and the grave, seemed at once to have closed upon him; for a large mass of the now unsupported earth from above suddenly descended upon his back; of which event, the previous fall of a small portion had given him timely but ineffectual warning.

It happened upon this, as it frequently does upon similar emergencies, when wit and reason fail or have no time to operate, that nature or instinct, assisted by a momentary but prodigious increase of galvanic impulse, made a Herculean effort, which accomplished more than an hour's labour and consideration would probably have effected; for the miser had the satisfaction to find, after a most tremendous struggle, that he had fairly achieved his own disinterment.

This was worth doing; and the feeling of complacency with which he reflected upon this happy event, far exceeded what he would have experienced had he unearthed a silver sign-post or a golden lion.

He perceived on arranging his locks and shaking the dust from his ears, that the incomprehensible accumulation of spirally involved bandages which he usually wore upon his head, had, together with his candle, in the press of business, been left behind. Since, however, fate had cast their lot in that obscurity for a season, he felt little disposed to murmur at the temporary separation which prevented his sharing it with them. Nevertheless, the detention of his wig was not altogether a thing to which he would have acceded had he been consulted; for, besides that it was exceedingly doubtful whether his wardrobe could supply any article that would readily become a substitute, there were valuables folded within it (to say nothing of what was tucked under it) sufficient to have maintained him for more than a century. He, however, had no doubt of regaining it ultimately, and determined to run all hazards for that purpose; so that this circumstance was the best possible security for his re-appearance, though he had little idea half an hour before that he should be so suddenly and closely confined, and be compelled to find bail on his liberation in so large an amount.

The old man found on beginning to move, that his back had not been so fitted to his burthen as to prevent

it from feeling stiff and uneasy in many places. A considerable portion of terreous matter had entered and still remained in his mouth, and some angular fragments of building materials had inconveniently insinuated themselves between himself and his drapery.

Altogether he felt strongly disposed to visit the upper regions; for light and fresh air seemed more desirable to him just then than they usually were. For this purpose he crept along the passage and the gallery, ascended the steps and entered the upper vault, all which movements had now become familiar, and proceeded to the surface. But here was a most confounding puzzle ready for him, and one that made him fear that his brains had been left behind, or turned upside down in the late scuffle; for whereas, on raising his head above ground, he expected to enjoy the gratuitous blessings of broad daylight, there was nothing but the most pitchy darkness to envelope his astonished poll.

That he had fairly emerged, was proved by a keen breeze that swept over his wigless pate. Either, therefore, his chronology was strangely at fault, and instead of being day it was really night, or he had gone blind, a misfortune that he imagined could scarcely have taken place without his knowledge.

Matters being in this state, he very meekly groped his way down again, uncertain whether he was blind or not, whether it was noon or midnight, only persuaded of this —that he could not see. He determined, however, as

soon as might be, to prove this point, for which purpose he made his way to the tinder-box, and urged the well-fought pugilistic combat between flint and steel, the result of which gave him more satisfaction than if he had staked and obtained twopence on the issue.

Having obtained a light, and being convinced by his capability of beholding it that daylight was not yet published, he thought he might as well examine the place from which he had recently escaped.

He was concerned to perceive that a mass of earth and stones had fallen, the removal of which would probably occupy him many weeks before he could reach the spot at which he had commenced his operations.

There was now another feature in the business, and a rather more awkward one than any that he had before discerned, since at first he had anticipated only labour, but now, there was not a little danger connected with it; for there was nothing to prevent a similar or a larger quantity from descending in future, from which he might not find it so easy to disengage himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

If any species of difficulty had been capable of making the miser relax his endeavours for the discovery of the treasure which he had the best reason to believe was concealed in these dungeons, that which was the most

nearly related to personal peril would undoubtedly have been the most likely to do so; and it cannot be denied, that the contemplation of the matter before him considerably lessened the power of those motives which had hitherto urged him to proceed.

How far these considerations might have influenced him had it not been for his jewelled peruke, it is impossible to say. The recollection of this, however, put every fear to flight, and he determined to dig it out, let the pains or perils be what they might.

With this view he set himself resolutely to work as before, filling and emptying his chest, until he had cleared the passage as far as the arch overhead remained entire. When he had done this, he sent an inquiring glance into the chasm above, which had been heretofore occupied by the mass that had descended. It was a most uncouth-looking void, extending he knew not how far, nor could he tell whether the next substance that might arrive would be earth, or the foundations of the superincumbent building. He saw, therefore, the necessity of providing some adequate shelter in case of falling weather, and for this purpose once more left the lower for the upper regions.

He had now the pleasure of perceiving that the dawn had arrived, which enabled him to rectify his notions to true time; although he found some difficulty in thus forcibly annihilating the ideas of five or six hours, which he had erroneously imagined should have preceded that event.

It had often been regretted by those who visited these ruins with antiquarian eyes, that some execrable barbarian had been suffered to erect a shed against the most interesting part of the structure; thereby presenting a hideous assemblage of barrel-staves, fagot-poles, and old boards of all sorts, surmounted by the sweepings of a farmyard, instead of the most majestic and beautiful specimen of ancient architecture that was to be seen in the county. It was, besides, particularly lamented that the greater part of the noble and richly ornamented gateway was thus hidden, leaving only one pier of the arch visible on the outside.

Now, it was strange, that seeing this unhappy shed was an object of such unlimited abuse, and that it had been long since deserted by even the gipsy nags that were its latest tenants, no one, gentle or simple, had hitherto possessed public spirit enough to pull it down; although every stake, stick, and straw of which it was composed might have been simultaneously prostrated by hooking a horse to one corner.

But of all birds in the air, or rather of worms in the earth, Ralph Richards, the miser, seemed the person least likely to undertake this business. He, however, is the man to whom the public are indebted for the denudation of this wall and gateway; for he had this shed in his eye at the moment of leaving the dungeons, and therefore, probably for his own convenience, destined its removal.

The moment that he found some old boards and planks would be requisite, he recollected where they might be obtained, and determined without scruple to appropriate as many of the materials of which this hovel was constructed as might suit his occasions. However, as he was afraid of exciting remark, he commenced by abstracting such parts as were least in sight and not essential to the support of the rest; for it was not until long after he had withdrawn the last board needful for his purpose that the shed, weakened by these means, of itself descended.

It was not without some trouble that the miser contrived to detach these fragments, and to introduce them to the place in which they were wanted; but this was easy indeed, compared with the labour of cutting, shaping, and adjusting them, so as to form a security above, similar to that afforded by the arch. He was, of course, obliged to continue these props and planks as far as his excavations appeared to render them necessary; and this, to the best of his judgment, was as often as his operations required him to protrude his head beyond the influence of those already fixed, and he had a peculiar kind of admonitory sensation in his conscious occiput, which duly apprized him when this was the case.

He continually made an inquiring thrust as he proceeded, after his cap and candle, which he was very anxious to meet with; but he was not quite aware of

the quantity of earth still intervening, nor how much his progress was retarded by arranging and fitting the boards above him. However, after having employed himself almost unremittingly in this manner, for several days, he regained them safely; yet, notwithstanding his constant solicitude on their account, they were very near being turned into the dungeon with a load of the earth that had contained them.

Had these articles been abandoned to their fate by our hero, and had they been discovered in a succeeding age by an ingenious and learned *virtuoso*, they would doubtless have given rise to some still more sagacious conjectures than any that had before been hazarded upon these curious ruins. The cap would have required consideration. Being found beneath the ruins of an English structure, it could scarcely have been the nest of a phœnix or of a griffin; more probably some article of dress, or intended for some domestic use;—*quære*, a skull-cap or a strainer; a peruke or a colander; —the shape might indicate the first, but the feculent residuum would suggest an idea of the second; or possibly—probably—*certainly*, it was used occasionally for both, according to that old incomprehensible rhyme, which happily includes cap, candle, and colander, in a few words :—

> For he, as many a wife can tell,
> Did run a merry rig;
> His pottage, stirred with a candell,
> He strained through his wig.

This brilliant and undeniable illustration of these hitherto inexplicable lines, was, however, unhappily prevented, by the miser himself finding his cap and candle, and appropriating them to the use for which he well knew they were intended, and having examined the folds of this trusty envelope, he once more placed it upon his head.

So strong is the power of association in the mind, or the idea of a place is so intimately and so permanently connected with the idea of an event which occurred there, that the situation will recall the circumstance with nearly the same sensations as those experienced at the time it happened. Thus dogs will yell on passing a spot impressed upon their memory by a sound horse-whipping; no wonder then, that the miser had some unpleasant sensations on perceiving the nook into which his head had been thrust when the earth closed over him, for he had now arrived at the spot where he had been so suddenly overwhelmed: he therefore, of course, took all imaginable care to prevent the recurrence of so awkward an accident, by making good his wooden securities above him.

As the greater part of this laborious work was productive of no incident whatever, it may be sufficient to observe, that he pursued it with little intermission, until he had removed the earth and had arrived at a mingled mass of bricks and stones, similar to that which first presented itself to his notice. Finding here some little

difficulty in working his way through with his hands, he forced his shovel against the obstruction, for the purpose of loosening some small portions more effectually, when they very suddenly retired, at the same time that another mass descended from above; but which, however, passed quickly out of sight, and left a very considerable opening for the miser's accommodation. But he withdrew upon this occasion as speedily as he could retrograde through the long wooden tube that he had constructed, having good reason to congratulate himself that he had not ventured his skull one inch beyond the shelter that his planks afforded.

CHAPTER XV.

It was upon the twentieth day of the third month from the time Ralph Richards removed the first chestful of earth and stones from this passage, that he removed the last; an undertaking to the magnitude of which the aspiring mountain in the dungeon bore ample testimony; indeed, the distance of the summit from the gallery was now so inconsiderable, that a fall from it would be by no means so objectionable as heretofore.

The old man having thus completed the removal, or rather the perforation of the intervening mass, there was no apparent objection to his entering, and availing himself immediately of the opening which he had laboured

so hard to accomplish: yet there was something far from tempting in the appearance of it; especially when connected with the late rapid movement and disappearance of the mass in the unknown gulf beyond.

The miser peered through it with that kind of suspicious curiosity with which a monkey would look through a telescope, or with which one might cast an eye down a gun-barrel; or with that indication of caution visible in the countenance of a terrier dog, whilst holding his lately-bitten nose before a rat-hole. I say, that the miser peeped through this tube with the same kind of curiosity, suspicion, and caution as any of these; and at the same time he watched the narrow field of vision at the further end, with as much inquisitive earnestness, for the appearance of any opaque body passing across it, as if he had been expecting a transit of Venus; because he well knew, that the transit, or rather the junction of any of these bodies with his own orb, would be to him the most important event that could occur in nature.

However, after the most careful observation and consideration, Ralph Richards determined to proceed through this Tartarean turnpike, though uncertain at present what the toll might be. He therefore introduced his body slowly and silently, listening with attention for any audible indications of danger; for he was quite aware that the wooden case which now contained him would become his coffin by a trifling alteration of structure arising from external circumstances.

With these apprehensions, he wormed his way for a distance that was equal to about three times his length, when a large gloomy aperture presented itself. This was the part through which some heavy body had recently descended from unknown vaults above, to equally unknown dungeons beneath. Here, therefore, his greatest peril commenced, and here the wooden props, his only protection, ended. No wonder then, that this cautious old man spent as much time in deliberation at this end of the tube as he had at the other; for his advance seemed to be hazardous, and his retreat might be doubtful.

It appeared that the arch of the passage had given way in consequence of the partial failure of a much larger one connected with it, which spanned the gloomy apartment that was now before the miser. His light just enabled him to perceive that the vault above was depressed by this failure on one side, but that it still supported itself, and probably also some immense superincumbent weight. He next directed his eye downwards; his candle, however, gave him no information as to the depth beneath him; but upon closely examining the wall immediately under the opening, he discerned a series of narrow steps. Once more he cast an inquiring glance above and below him, but nothing more was to be seen than has been described. He listened, but nothing was to be heard. His candle, which burned vividly enough, indicated a slight progression of the air,

by the inclination of the flame towards the part he occupied. This last circumstance gave rise to a number of surmises in his mind, none of which, however, were satisfactory.

At last he obtained his own consent, and issued from the passage, trusting himself upon these long-forsaken stairs, thinking it possible that he might find the treasure at their foot. Not exactly so.: at the bottom another passage opened before him, which, having no door, the miser entered, and proceeded along it in a straight direction for about twenty paces, when two ways suddenly presented themselves, each, at the entrance, similar to the other in every respect, and glancing aside with the same degree of obliquity.

Here, therefore, was a point for consideration, and he immediately called a council of all his wits, for an opinion upon the subject. These two ways were divided by a plain circular pillar of large dimensions, which rose straight up to a considerable height, and then spread into arches overhead. In the face of this column, or that part which first met his eye, was inserted a large stone in the form of a shield, upon which were deeply engraven many curious heraldic devices, under which was a copious Latin inscription ; the whole surmounted by a most ingeniously constructed monogram. All this was quite uninteresting and unintelligible to the miser ; yet, as he had reason to suppose that a guide to the treasure was here provided, he continued his examina-

tions, in the hope of perceiving something that might give him a hint in his researches. The only thing, however, that he could comprehend at all, was a small figure in one corner, representing a man winding up a bucket from a well. As this, unimportant as it seemed, was nevertheless more plain than anything beside, he bestowed more attention upon it, and on holding his candle close, discerned that the bucket in form resembled an earthern vase. This, without the interpretation of the inscription, furnished but scanty information, and little food for conjecture. All that the miser could resolve upon from it was this: that if he obtained a vase from a well, he would undoubtedly examine its contents.

Having nothing to guide him in deciding which of the two ways before him was the right one, he determined to try one first, for a short distance, and then the other, that he might judge for himself which was the most eligible. Accordingly, he proceeded a few steps along that to the right hand; this, however, soon became so low, narrow, and even rugged—requiring, at the same time, the inconvenient position upon hands and knees—that he presently resolved to return and try the other. He found, as he advanced in this passage, that it preserved the same dimensions as at the entrance, so that he continued his course without either crawling or even stooping. He perceived farther on, that the walls assumed a slight curve, which, however, turned aside more rapidly every step. The miser imagined, at first, that

he was on the outside of some large circular apartment, into which this path would conduct him. But at last it turned so quickly round, that he thought he had arrived at the column before mentioned; but this idea soon vanished, for in a few more steps he found himself on the inner side of this circular wall, and suddenly a narrow arched doorway stood before him, which he immediately entered. Here the passage lessened considerably in width, and performed apparently a complete circle, when a doorway appearing, exactly corresponding with that just mentioned, the miser concluded it must be the same: he therefore turned about, intending to retrace his steps, but unconsciously entered, as he proceeded, another passage, which curled round itself, and presently terminated in a strangely convoluted apartment, the entrance to which was so constructed, that it was hardly possible to recognise it as such, when it had been once lost sight of. After having again performed what appeared to be a complete circle, our revolving hero arrived at that which he conceived to be this door, but was confounded on perceiving that it conducted him to an angular termination of the passage, occasioned by the sudden intersection of these spiral walls.

With some alarm the miser again turned back; but nothing that now met his eye seemed to be what he had seen before. The doorway which presently stood before him had so uncouth an appearance, being placed obliquely in the wall, that he was convinced he could never

have been through it; he therefore passed on, and entering the archway before mentioned, pursued the windings to which it had then introduced him, and once more found himself at the angular intersection of the walls.

It was now sufficiently plain that these complex ways had been designed for the purpose of detaining any one who should enter them without the clue; a purpose which seemed to be entirely accomplished in the case of our bewildered hero, who now hurried, with desperate and heedless steps, round and round these circling paths, perpetually advancing and returning to the same spot again.

His candle was now nearly consumed; his knees trembled under him; a cold perspiration settled upon his brow; and his perilous adventures would no doubt here have been terminated, had not the hand of time defeated the intentions of those who constructed these labyrinths; for the wall had in one place fallen outwards, and thereby a considerable breach was occasioned. This the miser entered immediately upon perceiving it, careless whither it conducted him. It opened into a low, roughly-hewn passage, pointing alike to the right and left, and as the old man had lost all ideas of the relative situation of these walls, he waited not to consider, but turned to the left.

He had proceeded about a dozen steps, when the way suddenly widened, and ended in a circular pit of mode-

rate depth, the sides of which were accurately formed of hewn stones. One glance was sufficient. Quick as lightning the conviction darted through the mind of the miser, that here was the treasure; and with the speed of a thunderbolt he descended upon it, reckless of limbs or of life; for danger and death itself were to him, at this instant, trifles.

Of the miser's sensations nothing can be said, but that they extinguished for a time every other perception of mind or body; for his eyes failed to apprise him at the moment that he was in utter darkness.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE man who was drowned, by his own request, in a butt of malmsey, experienced, probably, sensations analogous to those of our miser when the real nature of his situation forced itself upon his mind. The flood of delight which first overwhelmed him, quickly savoured of uneasiness, and immediately after filled his soul with horror and despair.

His candle having failed him, it was not to be hoped that the escape which he could not effect while it lasted could be accomplished without its assistance. His doom, therefore, seemed to be fixed, and so it was undoubtedly; for which reason he must needs have emerged, had the

planet Jupiter been crumbled to atoms over him; for he that is born to be hanged will never be drowned; and he that is to starve by his own choice will never be starved by necessity. The destinies, therefore, that helped him into this place, were obliged to help him out; to whose good offices it should seem, rather than to his own exertions, it was owing, that our buoyant hero tumbled out of this well (which, however, was not deep) with nearly as much alacrity as he had lately tumbled in; when finding, after two or three attempts at progression on various sides, that his head encountered a stone wall, he felt around with his hands, and at last protruded his night-foundered noddle in that only direction that allowed it to advance.

Happily for him, he was now in a situation like a beetle in a bone, where he could neither turn nor miss his way; he therefore proceeded, to the best of his ability, on this new and important expedition of discovery, having little hope, however, that daylight would again bless his eyes. But the narrow walls that had heretofore perplexed him were now his most invaluable guides. In process of time this passage ended, and he found himself in a large void place, rendered slightly visible by slender but brilliant streams of light, which issued obliquely from a narrow fissure at a great height above him.

More precious, even to the miser, were these fine threads of day than bars of gold or silver would have

been at that moment. Had not his eyes been recently enveloped in such painful darkness, they would have been able to distinguish nothing in this place; it was however, to him comparatively light and clear, so that he instantly perceived, upon leaving the passage, that it was one of the two ways which presented themselves at first, on either side of the bulky pier, bearing the inscription which was now beside him. It was only when the sun shone strongly that any light pervaded this dismal vault; it was therefore entirely dark when he before entered it: but he could now, without his candle, distinctly perceive the large broken arch, doubtfully supporting itself overhead, which he had before observed.

Ralph Richards wanted no one to tell him that he was now out of danger, and that the passage which led *from* the treasure, led also *to* it. He would, it is probable, instantly have returned, had not the slender shreds of light been suddenly withdrawn, by which means the blackest midnight once more surrounded him. As he did not think it advisable to incur the hazard of perambulating in the amusing labyrinths to which the next step might again conduct him, he postponed his intentions, and with the next perceptible glimmer from above, gained the steps leading to the passage he had cleared, of which enough has been said.

Having procured a candle from his diminished store, and applied a match to it, he once more sought these deadly dungeons, an expedition, however, in which we

must again accompany him, or remain for ever ignorant of the result of his labours.

Nothing would be easier than to suppose, that, in this last journey to take possession, some ponderous mass closed over him, or some hidden gulf opened under him; such may have been the end of many adventurers in fact and in fiction, but such was not the end of Ralph Richards, the Miser. He gained the pit in which the treasure was deposited without difficulty, or even inconvenience, and with a good candle, nine inches long, in his hand; nor was the air amiss, owing to the fissures in the wall mentioned before. Moreover, he found, that steps were provided for the descent into this well, of which he knew nothing at first. Should any, therefore, feel at all curious to know what the miser obtained, they may without danger attend him, and look over his shoulder. Time had very accommodatingly removed the covering from the mouth of this pit, which remained in various fragments below. Our hero having disposed of these, witnessed a sight that might almost have justified those extravagant lines,—

> Ineffable amazement seize us!
> Speak not of Solomon or Crœsus—
> Doubtless the gods have pawned their plate,
> Aurora pledged her golden gate!
> Here Plutus, mortgagee, did toss it;
> Who shows at last, his secret closet:
> Compelled, no doubt, by blows and gags,
> Thus to reveal his secret bags!

But to be more particular. Cups, basins, sconces,

vases, spoons, plates, dishes, bracelets, chains, censers, rosaries, crosses, images, chalices; — implements and jewels of all sorts, civil, sacred, and military, of solid gold and silver, were here thrown down in heedless confusion, evidently in a moment of desperate hurry and alarm.

The miser knew not what either to think or do. He took up as many as he could grasp; thrust them under his arms; laid them down again; inclosed a parcel in his drapery; looked round; again replaced them; knelt upon them; sat down upon them; spread his coat over them, and listened; grinned, muttered, turned round and round, and could scarcely breathe. But these promiscuous articles were trifles. Willing to see to what depth they continued, he withdrew them from one side, and piled them up on the other. He then perceived earthen jars beneath, standing as thick as loaves in a baker's oven. Jars which the miser would almost have wept for joy to have had filled with halfpence, were here stored to the brim with coins of gold: his utmost strength could scarcely raise one of these pots. He expected to wake, rubbed his eyes, and shook himself; but no—it was not a vision in sleep, for he would never have dreamed of burning a candle. There was then, perhaps, a short space of time during which he felt something like happiness; it was, however, but a short space; for within ten minutes of their greatest elevation, his spirits were as much depressed as ever. The mind, like a thermometer, is maintained at a certain height by causes upon which

accidental circumstances have little influence. They raise or sink it, sometimes violently, at the instant of their application; but themselves gradually acquiring the temperature of the surrounding medium, the feelings at length settle nearly at the same point again. Nevertheless the mind *is* capable of permanent elevation and depression, the causes of which, however, are happily more at its own disposal.

But it was not exactly upon this principle, at present, that Ralph Richards felt little more happiness, and nearly as much uneasiness, as during many of his very awkward bodily perils and mental quandaries; for quickly a tremendous load of care weighed upon his mind: care, the alloy of gold, being specifically as heavy as gold itself; so that his positive good was balanced by positive evil, which rendered him as unhappy, while racking his brains for some method of removing and securing the treasure before him, as he was whilst devising means for clearing away and disposing of the rubbish that obstructed the passage.

In this enviable state of mind our hero stood, knee deep in gold and silver, of which no one was disputing the possession with him. His candle, however, at length admonished him, that something must speedily be done. He therefore determined to remove the treasure as expeditiously as possible to the vault containing the coffins before mentioned, during the day, and to convey it thence to his own dwelling by night.

He now proceeded to dispose as many of those valuables about his garments as they would contain, ingeniously arranging the variously-shaped implements in the variously-shaped receptacles of his apparel.

When he had thus loaded himself to the utmost, he perceived an article of still larger dimensions at his feet than any he had yet seen. This was a thing of which the miser knew not the design, but supposed it to be the lid of a boiler. It was, however, a silver shield, richly embossed, though not the *ægis* of Minerva, or it would have furnished him with wit enough to have made a tray of it for the other articles. The old man eagerly grasped this, and several others which it had covered, until he resembled an emblematical figure of Europe, or a pawnbroker making his escape in a fire with such articles of value as came first to hand. He however found, upon attempting to move, that it would be needful to exonerate himself of one half his load, before he could gain the upper regions in safety: his own volitions being entirely counteracted by the free agency of his self-moving drapery, which swagged from side to side in a way that compelled our hero to do the same, as a man with the pendulum-bob of the church-clock in his pocket involuntarily imitates the motion to which it has been accustomed.

The miser, therefore, was compelled to unload, and resumed a smaller quantity; with this he proceeded by the usual route, and carefully deposited it at the further

end of the upper vault; then returning to the well, he repeated the process.

It, however, occupied him longer to empty this pit of gold than to complete many of the laborious operations which he had undertaken to obtain it; for the narrow ways through which he had to pass, particularly that which he had himself cleared, and the inconvenient steps that he had to ascend, allowed of little addition to his own size and weight. It will be believed, however, that the perseverance which penetrated the block of stone and the obstructed passage would not be likely to fail him in removing the treasure.

This employment being rather barren of incidents, it will be sufficient to state, that in process of time the miser arrived at a substance for the removal of which he felt no inducement, it being the bottom of the well. Yet here he employed himself an incredible time, scratching picking, and even digging for anything that might still be hidden. At length, however, he cleared it so satisfactorily, that he would not have grudged Dame Trudge a lodging there, and would even have helped her in if needful.

The apartment of the dead into which he had conveyed the treasure, was now furnished in a manner that few apartments of the living could equal. The fountain of gold was now a mountain of gold, by the side of which stood thirty or forty earthen jars filled with the same enchanting metal.

The miser capered about it like a cannibal round a roasting enemy, rubbing his hands, and grinning from ear to ear. Nevertheless, his mouth frequently diminished to a scarcely perceptible line, as the possibility of discovery crossed his brain, upon which the idea of his formidable foe, the old woman, was so strongly imprinted, that he more than once imagined he saw her at the opening above, and actually seized the impressive tipstaff which had served so well upon a former occasion. That, however, was a dose that needed not to be repeated. The witch felt so thoroughly persuaded that it was supernaturally administered (and what else could she think?) that she never again wandered within many a yard of that memorable spot, and was very well contented to leave the miser alone, concluding that if she was not permitted to look, he would scarcely be permitted to dig.

It now only remained for him to remove the treasure to his own residence—an operation, however, which he dreaded as much, as if he had been obliged to transport it red hot in his hands. The apprehension of being seen made the idea of daylight a misfortune to him, and every human being a foe, and fervently he wished that all eyes were out but his own.

However, as not a rat or a toad saw the less clearly for this wish, he resolved that only in the blackest darkness that midnight afforded would he attempt it; nor hazard one atom of gold while a ray lingered in the

horizon, or wandered from a star. Under these circumstances this bird of night determined to feather his nest, hoping that if ever ghosts appeared, to keep guard upon these grounds, they would (seeing they had allowed him to discover the treasure) aid him in the removal of it.

"The iron tongue of time had performed its long dirge in the attentive ear of night," before our hero could prevail upon himself to commence his labours. At length, however, he raised his head from the vault, and turned it in all directions. It was dark enough, for he could not have distinguished a horse-chestnut from a chestnut-horse, had they been before him. Being, therefore, pretty well satisfied, he once more ducked his head under; and having made the most judicious arrangement of as much gold about his person as he deemed it prudent to carry at one time, he emerged, and completed his journey in safety, by feeling his road, as on former occasions.

In this manner, during the darkest part of nearly two hundred nights, the miser conveyed the whole of the treasure to his own dwelling, accomplishing thereby a distance of nearly 500 miles upon his hands and knees.

Having thus attended our hero during all his perilous adventures for the discovery of this well-hidden treasure, and having, moreover, seen him safe home with it, there remains little more to be said concerning him, and probably few will regret dropping the acquaintance. It would be neither instructive nor amusing to dwell long

upon his uneasy apprehensions for the safety of his newly-acquired wealth, or to notice particularly the various measures that he adopted for its security; all this may be very readily imagined. There is, however, one little circumstance touching these arrangements which it may be as well to mention, since it was more satisfactory to his own mind than any other, and gives rather a peculiar aspect to his former labours. It was merely this: that after having vainly racked his brain for some scheme that should completely agree with his ideas of security —running about with it, like a crow with a worm in his mouth, from place to place, from one retirement to another, harassing body and mind, until almost in despair, it suddenly occurred to him that the well beneath the old ruins was exactly suited to his purpose.

Under cover, therefore, of a few more dark nights, he crawled a few more hundred miles, and at length had the satisfaction of safely bestowing the last particle of the treasure in this trustworthy concealment, where it doubtless remains—the property of any one whose ideas of possession correspond with those of Ralph Richards the Miser.

THE IRON BOX.

BY ISAAC TAYLOR.

PETER SIMONS was the son of a poor fisherman who lived in a solitary cottage, built of rough stone, on the steep side of a rock which faced the sea. Behind the cottage the dark jagged cliff slanted up to a great height: before it you might look straight down upon the sea, two hundred feet below. Steps cut in the solid rock formed a winding path which led down to the sea side. On one side of the house there was a stack of furze to serve for fuel; on the other side was a small level space, surrounded with poles, on which the fisherman hung his nets to dry. The front of the cottage was covered with rows of dried fish, of different sorts, cut open, and all shrivelled and yellow: at the door hung the fisherman's great sea boots, and his rough blue coat lined with red stuff.

Peter was a lazy boy; and his father and mother used no means to correct his idle habits; but suffered him to spend his time as he pleased. Sometimes he would lie half the day on the ground before the door, just

looking over the edge, to watch the curling foam of the waves among the broken rocks below; or throw down stones to see them jump from ledge to ledge as they fell. When the weather was perfectly calm, and the sun shone, so that, from the top of the hill, the sea appeared all in a blaze of light, you might perceive a black speck at some distance, like a lark in the clear sky; this was the fisherman's small boat, in which Peter would spend all the hours from one tide till the next. Having anchored the boat on a sand-bank, he would doze with his hat slouched over his face; or, if he was awake, listen to the tapping of the waves against the side of the boat; and now and then halloo, to make the gulls that were swimming about rise into the air. But most often, in fine weather, he would saunter along upon the beach, to a neck of sand about a mile from his home. Here there was the old hulk of a sloop, that had been wrecked at a spring tide; so that it lay high upon the beach; it was now half sunk in the sand, and the seaweed had gathered round it three or four feet deep. It was Peter's delight to sit upon the deck, lolling against the capstan, while his naked legs dangled down the gangway in the forecastle.

When the weather was too cold to sit still out of doors, and when his mother drove him from the chimney corner, Peter would take a large knife and an old hat, and gather mussels from the rocks: but almost the only thing of any use which he did in the whole course of the

year, was to plait a straw hat for himself, and patch his jacket.

Peter always seemed dismal and discontented; he seldom more than half opened his eyes, except when he was searching the crannies of the rocks, and fumbling in the heaps of seaweed, after a storm, in hope of finding something that had been thrown up by the waves. Indeed, he lived in expectation that some great good luck would one day befall him in this way: and so in fact it happened.

One morning after a gale of wind and a very high spring tide, the sea retired so far that Peter made his way to a reef of rocks which he had never before been able to reach. There were two hours before the tide would oblige him to return: he determined therefore to make the best use of the time in hunting over this new ground. He scrambled up and down, and jumped from rock to rock so nimbly, that, at a little distance, no one would have guessed that it was Peter Simons. He dived his arm deep into the weedy basins in the rocks; and groped, with his hands under water, among the pebbles, shells, and oily weed with which they were filled. Nothing, however, was to be found, except now and then a whitened bone, a piece of green sheet-copper, or some rusty iron.

Peter stayed till the sea had several times washed over the sand-bank which joined the reef of rocks to the shore. It was now necessary to make speed back;

and he took such long strides in returning, that he sank over his ankles in the loose sand. Just before he reached the solid ground, he set his bare foot upon a staple and ring, to which a small rope was tied: he pulled the rope pretty stoutly, supposing it to be fastened to a piece of timber from a wreck; but, in doing so, he dragged from under the sand an Iron Box, about six inches square. It was very rusty, and he would have thought it a solid block of iron, if it had not been for the appearance of hinges on one side.

"Now," said Peter, "here's my fortune to be sure in this box: what should an *Iron* Box be for, but to keep gold and diamonds in! Nobody shall know a word of this till I see what's in it." He knocked and banged it about on the rocks for some time, to get it open; but finding his efforts vain, he determined, for the present, to carry it to the old sloop, where he spent so much of his time, and lodge it safely in the sand which filled the hold: by the time he had done this, it was nearly dark.

Although he had been kept awake some part of the night, in making various guesses of what might be in the box, and in planning what he should do with his treasure, Peter rose two hours before his usual time the next morning. The rising sun shone upon the highest peak of the rocky headland, just as he climbed upon the deck of the sloop. He had brought a large knife and a hammer with him, to force the box open; but he

found he could not get the point of the knife in any where; and all his blows with the hammer only made the rusty flakes of iron peel off from the sides of the box: no trace of a key-hole could be found; and when the top of the box was cleaned, it appeared that the lid was screwed down on three sides. Peter buried the box again in the same place; and set himself to think what was to be done. He knew that the blacksmith at the village could open the box easily enough; but he would trust his secret to nobody. The only way therefore was to procure tools, and go to work upon it himself. Lazy folks, when they choose to exert themselves, are often very ingenious, and sometimes, even, very diligent. Peter had not a penny of his own. How was he to get money enough to buy a screw-driver?

Peter Simons, as we have said before, could plait a straw hat pretty neatly. It was a sort of employment that suited him; because he could do it while he sat lolling in the sunshine, thinking about nothing, with his eyes half shut, and his mouth half open. He thought that if he made two or three hats, he might be able to sell them at the town for as much money as would buy the screw-driver, or what other tools he might want. He procured the straw, therefore, and taking it to the cabin of the old sloop, went to work more heartily than ever he had done in his life before. Peter's father and mother concerned themselves very little with the manner in which he spent his time: and when he took his dinner

with him, and was absent the whole day, his mother was glad to get rid of him, and asked him no questions when he came home in the evening.

The first thing that Peter did every morning before he sat down to his straw-hat making, was to take the box out of the sand, and make some violent efforts to force it open without further ado: but after spending some time in turning it about, looking at it, banging it against the rock, and trying to wheedle in the point of the knife, he quietly buried it in its place; having convinced himself afresh that the only way was to go on steadily with the plan he had determined upon. He often wondered that he could not hear the diamonds or the guineas rattle, when he shook the box; but he concluded that it was stuffed so full, that there was no room for them to wag.

After Peter had been thus diligently employed several days, he began to feel a pleasure in work which was quite new to him: although he now rose two or three hours earlier than he used to do, the days seemed to him shorter, instead of longer, than they did when he spent all his time in idleness. He almost lost his habit of yawning; and when he went home in the evening, instead of squatting down sulkily in the chimney corner, he would jump about the house, and do little jobs for his mother. "I don't know what's come to our Peter," said his mother, "he's not the same boy that he was."

At length he finished three straw hats, which he

reckoned he might sell to the boys on the quay, at the neighbouring seaport town, for a shilling at least. Off he set, therefore, early the next morning; going a round-about way, to avoid being seen by any one who knew him: the distance was ten miles. He sold his hats in the course of the day—bought a screw-driver and an iron wedge; and got back time enough to go and deposit his tools along with the box before he returned home.

Although he was very tired with his walk, he rose the next morning before daybreak; and he felt no doubt that by the time his mother had made the kettle boil for breakfast he should be a rich man; but Peter reckoned rather too hastily. He soon found that he could do nothing with the screw-driver: all his efforts only made the heads of the screws smooth and bright: he perceived that he must cut off the heads of the screws, by filing deep notches in the edge of the lid: for this purpose he must get two files; to procure which he must sell at least two more hats. This was a sad trial of Peter's patience. It was a whole week before he made his second journey to the town, and bought the two files. But he had now a long job before him. Not being used to hard work, it was late in the evening before he had made a notch so deep as completely to cut away the head of the first screw, and there were nine screws in the lid.

His arms ached so much, when he went to bed, that

he could hardly sleep; and his wrists were so stiff the next morning, that he made very little progress in his work during the whole day; but kept filing faintly,—a little at one screw, and then a little at another. The third and fourth day, however, he seemed to have gained strength by labour; and after a week's toil, he filed away the head of the last screw: but, even now, the screws were so completely rusted into their holes, that he began to think all the force he could use would never make the lid move: at length a lucky blow drove the iron wedge a full inch under the lid; and, after a great deal of twisting and hammering, the box came open. And what was in it? Nothing at all!—empty—empty! quite empty!

With the hammer in one hand, and the wedge in the other, Peter stood staring into the box a long while, scarcely knowing where he was. At last he scrambled up out of the hold of the vessel, laid himself down upon the deck, and cried and sobbed for an hour or two. But he resolved that he would not be laughed at for his disappointment; so he dried up his tears, slunk home when it grew dark, went to bed without taking his supper, and fretted till he fell asleep.

But Peter Simons had now learned to exert himself;—his thoughts had been actively engaged for several weeks; he had felt the satisfaction of earning money by his own labour; he had broken the habit of lying in bed till breakfast time; he had become really stronger by

hard work: in short, he could not bear the thought of living for the future as he had done, in wretched idleness. "Father," said he, "I should like to earn my living like other folks: I wish you'd put me to the blacksmith's to work."

Peter's wish was accomplished before he had time to repent of it: he was put to work at the blacksmith's: in due time he learned the business well; and got the character of being a clever and industrious workman. When he was in business for himself, he used to say, "I found all my good fortune in an empty box."

PHEBE'S VISIT.

BY MRS. HERBERT (JEMIMA TAYLOR).

"My love, I think I have something to say that will please you," said Phebe's mamma to her one day.

"Oh dear, have you, mamma?—pray tell me directly," said Phebe; "I cannot think what it is."

"Why, my love, Mrs. Mason has been here this morning, and she was so kind as to ask me to let you spend a few days with her; so I told her, that if you were a good girl you should go on Tuesday. Shall you like it, Phebe?"

"Oh dear, yes, mamma! How very much delighted I am!—what a good girl I will be: But what a while it is to wait—Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday —I wish it had been sooner. I shall be so happy! I suppose Mrs. Mason's house is not at all like ours, is it, mamma?"

"No, my dear; I believe that you will find many things at Mrs. Mason's quite different from what you see here."

"Dear, how glad I am of that," said Phebe; "and

then, besides all the fine things I shall see there, I shall not have my lessons to learn, nor be called to do a great many tiresome jobs that hinder me so when I am at play; and I shall not have William to tease me; and that will be a great comfort."

"So you really think that you shall be happier without poor William, do you, Phebe? I am sorry for that," said her mother.

"Oh, I like to have him with me sometimes, mamma; and so I should always, if he would not tease me so much; but it was only the other day that he came into the nursery, when I had drest my doll in a clean white frock, and it was looking so pretty; and instead of praising it, as I expected, he held it up by one foot and laughed at it, and said he wondered what pleasure I could take in making clothes for a log of wood. And he did what was worse still, last night, mamma; for he took up my wax doll, and really held one of its hands to the candle, because he said he wanted to seal a letter to cousin Thomas: but papa was in the room, and reproved him for it (which I was very glad of), and said he wondered how he could tease the poor child so; and then William said he did not really intend to do it, because it was not the right sort of wax; but I dare say he would, if papa had not been there. Now wasn't it very wrong of him, mamma?"

"I know he often teases you, my love, for boys are very fond of teasing their little sisters; but I think you

should not be very glad when he is reproved, because he is really good-natured, and willing to do anything for you that you want."

"So he is, poor fellow," said Phebe; "and I did not particularly wish him to be reproved, only I was afraid that he would spoil my doll. But let us say something more about going to Mrs. Mason's, mamma. I dare say I shall sit up to supper every night; and I shall most likely sleep in a room all by myself, instead of being in the nursery; and everything will be a great deal more pleasant than it is here."

"Why, really, Phebe," said her mamma, "if a little girl who lives in a comfortable house, with a kind papa and mamma, and several good brothers and sisters, and a great many playthings, finds so much to be discontented with, I cannot promise that she will find every thing just as she would wish it, even at Mrs. Mason's."

"I am not *very* discontented, mamma," said Phebe; "only I think there are a few things that I would alter if I were a woman, and could do exactly as I liked."

"I never yet heard of a woman who *could* do exactly as she liked, Phebe; and I am afraid that, when you are a woman, you will always find somebody to tease you, even though William should live a great many miles away; and though you should then have no papa and mamma 'to make you do a great many tiresome jobs when you want to play;' or rather, I mean, Phebe, that those who are apt to be fretful and discontented about

very little things, will always have a great many little things to fret about."

Phebe could never think of the time when she should have no papa and mamma, without feeling the tears come into her eyes, for she loved her parents dearly; and if ever she felt unwilling to leave off playing when her mother called her, she had only to think, how very, *very* sorry she should be, when *that* time came, to recollect that her mamma had ever found her disobedient or unkind; and then she left off, and went cheerfully, even though she were at play ever so prettily.

"However, mamma," said Phebe, who wished to continue the conversation, "I cannot think of anything that is likely to make me at all uncomfortable while I am at Mrs. Mason's."

"Then I hope you will be quite happy all the time, my love; and remember, when you return, I shall ask you whether you have been so or not."

"Oh, do, mamma! pray do not forget it," said Phebe, who thought that, for once, her mamma would certainly be mistaken.

Phebe's mamma was quite right in telling her that she would find many things at Mrs. Mason's different from what she had been used to at home; for Phebe's parents lived in a handsome red brick house, in the middle of a large town; there was a garden behind the house, but it was not very large, and there were high brick walls all round it; and then they had to

walk through several smoky streets before they could get into the pretty green fields, and feel the sweet fresh air blowing on them. But Mr. Mason's was a cheerful-looking white house, standing in the midst of the fields, with a great many tall trees about it, and a farmyard in sight of one of the windows, where there were cows, and pigs, and ducks, and geese, and a number of things that were all quite new to Phebe. Mr. and Mrs. Mason, too, were plain, elderly people, not at all like Phebe's papa and mamma; but they were very pleasant people, and Phebe had often heard her parents say that they had a great respect for them. They had no family of their own, but they were very fond of children: Mrs. Mason, particularly, was extremely good-natured to them, and was sure to laugh at everything they said.

Phebe asked a great many questions every day about her visit, and thought that Tuesday was a long while coming; however, it came at last, and when dinner was over the chaise was brought to the door, and as soon as she was comfortably seated between her papa and mamma they set off, and Phebe began to be very happy.

"Well, Phebe, are you quite happy?" said her papa, after they had gone a little way.

"Yes, thank you, papa;—that is to say, I should be, if the sun did not shine exactly in my eyes; and I am obliged to keep holding my bonnet too, or else I am afraid the wind would blow it off; and that makes my arm ache rather."

"So you see, my love, there is always something to keep us from being *quite* happy," said her papa.

"Yes, till we get to Mrs. Mason's, papa," replied Phebe.

"What a pretty house," exclaimed she, as the chaise stopped at Mr. Mason's gate; "and what a nice garden before it!"

They were shown into a very pretty cheerful parlour, with a window almost down to the ground, overlooking the garden, which was filled with all sorts of flowers; and just beyond the garden was a large meadow, where there were a number of lambs skipping about, and looking as frolicsome as could be. Mr. and Mrs. Mason took a great deal of notice of Phebe, and promised that she should have whatever she liked all the while she was there.

"Oh, how I will run about in the fields to-morrow," thought Phebe; "and then when I come in, how delightful it will be to sit in this pretty parlour and look at the lambs!"

Soon after tea her papa and mamma left her, with many injunctions to be a good girl. She had never visited anywhere alone before, and she could scarcely help crying when she saw them drive out of sight, and leave her all alone, five miles from home. It soon grew dark, and Phebe began to feel very tired. Mr. Mason was reading the newspaper, and Mrs. Mason had got her knitting; but Phebe had nothing at all to do, and very much wished it was bed-time.

"Perhaps, my dear, you'd like to go to bed before supper," said Mrs. Mason, seeing her look very sleepy.

"No, thank you, Ma'am, I had much rather sit up to supper," said Phebe, gaping.

"I am sure I do not know what we can find to amuse you," said Mrs. Mason; "for I have no playthings, and I'm afraid you'll be sadly dull, poor thing:—let's see, though," said she. "I think there's a box of dominoes somewhere, if I can but find them. Oh, here they are, I declare: you'll like them, won't you, dear?"

Phebe was not very fond of dominoes, especially when she had no one to play with her; she contrived, however, by the help of them, to keep her eyes open till supper-time; and directly after supper she went to bed, thinking that the *evening* was not quite so pleasant at Mrs. Mason's as she had expected. Besides, she had never slept by herself before, and she felt so lonely when Susan had taken her candle away, that she was glad to go to sleep as fast as possible.

The next morning she awoke in very good spirits, and rose the moment that Susan called her. She found her way to the parlour, but was surprised to see that the window shutters were not open.

"No, this way, if you please, Miss," said Susan, opening a door on the other side of the passage.

"Dear," said Phebe, looking quite amazed as she entered a large old-fashioned kitchen, strewed with red sand, finding that they were really going to breakfast

there. "Well, I did not know that people ever lived in kitchens: I thought they were only made for servants. We do not live in ours."

"No, I dare say not," said Mrs. Mason; "but you like this kitchen, love, don't you?"

"Yes, I like it very well," replied Phebe; "but I think the parlour a great deal more pleasant:—besides, the bricks are so cold to one's feet. We have carpets in all our rooms except the kitchen; and I daresay we should have one there, if we lived in it. Such nice warm thick ones; I think they call them Turkey carpets. You cannot think how comfortable they are."

"Aye, I dare say they are for those that like them; but I am very happy without one, my little lady," said Mr. Mason, who knew that he had excellent reasons for not having a Turkey carpet in his kitchen.

"But how I wonder you do not live in the parlour: I cannot think what you have it for," said Phebe, who was very fond of talking when her mamma was out of the way.

"We have it to use sometimes, when we want it, my dear," said Mrs. Mason; "but I like the kitchen best in common."

"Oh, I suppose you only use it when you have company; that's it, I dare say," said Phebe; "and that is why we were there last night when papa and mamma were here. Well, I shall tell them that, when I go home."

"I dare say your Ma don't want to hear about that, my dear," said Mrs. Mason; "for my part, I don't think it worth remembering; not I."

"Oh yes, I shall certainly tell her," replied Phebe. "I am sure she will think it very funny that you should live in the kitchen."

Phebe could not help thinking, just now, that she would "do a great many tiresome jobs," as well as submit to some of William's teasing, rather than always live in a kitchen—especially in a kitchen without a carpet.

She employed herself during breakfast in looking at everything in the kitchen, and made many observations, some of which were very impertinent; and though Mr. and Mrs. Mason laughed at the droll things she said, they would have felt rather uncomfortable if anybody else had been there to hear them.

"Oh dear, there is a gun!" said she, having at last discovered the square hole in the ceiling, in which Mr. Mason kept his fire-arms.

"Ay!—shall I take it down and show it you, dear?" said Mr. Mason.

"Oh no, pray don't—pray don't!" said Phebe; "I am so frightened at it." Phebe had often heard her mamma tell William that guns were dangerous things for children, because they sometimes went off when people did not expect it; so notwithstanding all that Mr. Mason could say, she kept casting anxious glances at the ceiling,

all breakfast time, as if she were every instant expecting to be shot.

When breakfast was over, Phebe felt very glad that she was not required to go to her lessons, though she longed for somebody to play with. She wandered for some time about the garden; and at last ventured into the field which adjoined it. "Dear," thought she, "how courageous Mamma would think me, if she could see me now,—walking all alone in the fields; and I am not at all afraid."

The meadow was covered with cowslips, daisies, and buttercups: and she gathered a lap full of them, together with some primroses and violets, with which the hedges were filled. She then sat down on the stump of a tree close to the stile, at the further end of the field, and began making them into a large nosegay. She had nearly finished it, when she heard a noise like something breathing very hard, close to her; and lifting up her head, she saw a terrific bull, standing close to the other side of the stile, looking at her. Without waiting an instant to consider what harm it could do for a bull to look at her, she threw down all her flowers; and set off running home as fast as she could, not stopping even to look back at him, till she had got within the garden gate. "Oh dear, the bull!" exclaimed Phebe, scarcely able to speak.

"My patience, Miss! whatever have you been a doing of?" said Susan, as soon as she saw her.

"Why I was sitting quietly close to the stile, and I just happened to look up, and there was a great bull staring at me as hard as he could; and I was so very much frightened; and I am so hot and tired with running:—Oh dear! Oh dear!" said Phebe.

"What's the matter,—what's the matter?" cried Mrs. Mason, running to her; for having heard Phebe's exclamation, she feared that some misfortune had happened.

"Why, Ma'am," said Susan, laughing heartily, "if Miss han't been a scampering all across the long mead as hard as ever she could tear, just because she saw the bull a-looking at her; and she is in such a heat, poor thing."

"Bless the child," said Mrs. Mason, "why, what did you think he could do to you?"

"Oh, Ma'am, he looked exactly as if he was just going to jump over the gate at me, and then what should I have done?"

"Not he, indeed; he would soon have been tired of looking at you, and then he would have walked away again. But it is well he was not in the same field, for then, if he had seen you running, he would most likely have run after you."

"Well, I almost wish I had not minded it now," said Phebe; "and I have lost all my pretty flowers: dear, how sorry I am."

"Oh, never mind the flowers," said Mrs. Mason, "there are plenty more to be found: but do sit down and cool yourself, child."

Phebe was so tired and heated with her run, that she sat still for a very long time, thinking how wonderful it was that anybody should not be frightened at a bull, and wishing, too, that she had not lost her flowers. She did not, however, feel inclined to gather any more that day, but thought she would wait till the next morning, and then summon up all her courage for another ramble. But what was her disappointment at finding, when she awoke in the morning, that it rained hard! She thought it very unfortunate, that, out of so few days, one of them should be rainy.

"Dear! dear! what shall I find to do all day long?" said Phebe as soon as she came down stairs. "What a very great pity it is that it should rain so fast."

"Oh, do not make troubles out of nothing, my little lass," said Mr. Mason, "I daresay you will find something to do, though it is a wet day: beside, don't you know that we should not complain when things are not just as we wish them to be?"

It was no wonder, if poor Phebe felt rather low-spirited at the prospect of a rainy day, with neither playfellows nor playthings to amuse her. It was really not much better than being at home. She followed Mrs. Mason into the dairy; but the wind and rain, beating in through the open wirework of the window, made it so damp and chilly, that she was soon tired of standing there. Phebe thought that of all Mrs. Mason's

old-fashioned ways this was the oddest—to have a window without any glass in it. "How I wonder you do not have glass instead of wire in that window; it would be so much warmer," said Phebe, holding her hand against her ear, that the wind might not blow into it.

"That's the very reason why we've wire instead of glass, my dear," said Mrs. Mason, laughing; "for, if we had not a great deal of air, the milk would not keep sweet.

"Oh, wouldn't it? I did not know that," said Phebe, who just now recollected what her Mamma had very often told her; that children should never attempt to teach grown people.

She returned to the kitchen again, and stood for some time at the window, looking into the farmyard; but there was nothing to be seen but a few cows, standing as still as Phebe, and seeming not much happier.

"How I should like to have that to play with," said Phebe, pointing to a large glass case which stood over the mantelpiece; "but I suppose I must not."

This glass case was indeed enough to tempt any little girl, especially one who, like Phebe, had not anything to do. It contained, among other things, two smiling wax dolls, dressed in stiff silk frocks, with some gold lace at the bottom, also a number of shells, a white mouse,

a peach, and a cucumber; some in wax and some in stone; all nicely arranged, among large bunches of artificial flowers. But Mrs. Mason could not consent to have this taken down and pulled to pieces; and the mantel-piece being very high, poor Phebe's neck ached long before she had looked at it as much as she wished.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Mason, laying down her work, "I've just thought of something that will be the very thing for you. I've got a doll upstairs, if I am not mistaken, that I've had ever since I was such another as you:—how glad I am I happened to think of it!" So she went upstairs directly in search of it; and Phebe followed close behind, wishing she would walk rather faster.

"Oh, what a frightful-looking thing!" exclaimed Phebe, as soon as she saw it; and perhaps most other little girls would have thought the same; though certainly Phebe should not have appeared so discontented, when Mrs. Mason was trying to please her. It was a large black doll, dressed in a coarse white frock, which had grown very yellow and dusty with lying by. The waist was very long, with tight sleeves coming just below the elbows; and the doll had a row of pink beads round its black neck.

"I do not like it at all," said Phebe: "I wonder you should have kept it so long; what ugly things old-fashioned people used to like!"

"Then I'll put it away again, shall I, dear?" said Mrs. Mason; "'tis a pity I left off my work to fetch it."

"No, I think I'll take it, as there is nothing else," said Phebe; "but I don't know how I shall play with it.—Oh stay, though," said she, "I know now what I'll do. I'll suppose that it is a Hottentot just come to England. It will do very well for that, will it not?" So she ran downstairs with it, feeling in rather better spirits than she had done all the morning.

Phebe amused herself the rest of the day with the Hottentot, the glass case, and the box of dominoes; and went to bed hoping most earnestly that the next morning would be fine.

To her great joy she saw the sun shining brightly into her room as soon as she opened her eyes; but Phebe could not run about in the meadow, because the grass was too wet; she therefore amused herself as well as she could in the garden, and watched the carriages that passed in the road.

In the afternoon she went with Susan to see the cows milked, and stood looking at them for a long time very comfortably, till she happened to turn round, and see the bull standing in the yard.

"Oh dear," said she, catching hold of Susan's apron, "I do think that's the very bull that looked at me on Wednesday."

"Aye, that he is, you may depend upon it, Miss," said Susan; "and I shouldn't wonder but he's a going to look

at you again to-day, too ; so be sure you keep fast hold of me."

Phebe did not once let go her hold of Susan's apron, and was very glad when she said that it was time to go in to tea.

Phebe stayed two or three days longer at Mrs. Mason's, and was surprised to find every day that some little thing happened to make her rather uncomfortable ; or else (as was often the case with Phebe) she was discontented when there was no *real* occasion. So that she sometimes thought there were as many things to tease her at Mrs. Mason's as at home ; only they were of a different sort.

At last the day came on which Mrs. Mason had agreed to take her home. Everything looked so cheerful and pretty that morning, that Phebe thought she should have been quite happy if she could only have stayed one more day ; but this was out of the question, for very soon after breakfast Mrs. Mason was ready to set off ; and after what Phebe thought a very short ride, they reached the bustling town.

" Well, Ma'am, I've brought her home safe and sound, you see," said Mrs. Mason, when they went in. "She has been a very good girl, and we were delighted to hear her talk ; but she is so timid, pretty dear, she's afraid of everything."

To prove this, Mrs. Mason told the story of the bull, which Phebe had not intended to mention, because she

knew that William would be sure to laugh at her for it, and so he did very much.

Mrs. Mason did not stay long, but kissing Phebe, left her to tell all the particulars of her visit; and her Mamma did not forget to ask if anything had happened, "*to make her in the least uncomfortable while she was there.*"

THE SQUIRE'S PEW.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

A SLANTING ray of evening light
Shoots through the yellow pane;
It makes the faded crimson bright,
And gilds the fringe again:
The window's gothic framework falls
In oblique shadow on the walls.

And since those trappings first were new,
How many a cloudless day,
To rob the velvet of its hue,
Has come and passed away!
How many a sètting sun hath made
That curious lattice-work of shade?

Crumbled beneath the hillock green
The cunning hand must be,
That carved this fretted door, I ween—
Acorn and *fleur-de-lis;*
And now the worm hath done her part
In mimicking the chisel's art.

—In days of yore (that now we call)
When James the First was king,
The courtly knight from yonder hall
His train did hither bring;
All seated round in order due,
With broidered suit and buckled shoe.

On damask cushions, set in fringe,
All reverently they knelt:
Prayer-books, with brazen hasp and hinge,
In ancient English spelt,
Each holding in a lily hand,
Responsive at the priest's command.

—Now, streaming down the vaulted aisle,
The sunbeam, long and lone,
Illumes the characters awhile
Of their inscription stone;
And there, in marble hard and cold,
The knight and all his train behold.

Outstretched together, are expressed
He and my lady fair,
With hands uplifted on the breast,
In attitude of prayer;
Long visaged, clad in armour, he,—
With ruffled arm and bodice, she.

Set forth, in order as they died,
The numerous offspring bend;
Devoutly kneeling side by side,
As though they did intend
For past omissions to atone
By saying endless prayers in stone.

Those mellow days are past and dim,
But generations new,
In regular descent from him,
Have filled the stately pew;
And in the same succession, go
To occupy the vault below.

And now the polished, modern squire,
And his gay train appear,
Who duly to the hall retire,
A season, every year,—
And fill the seats with belle and beau,
As 'twas so many years ago.

Perchance, all thoughtless as they tread
The hollow-sounding floor
Of that dark house of kindred dead,
Which shall, as heretofore,
In turn, receive, to silent rest,
Another, and another guest,—

The feathered hearse and sable train,
In all its wonted state,
Shall wind along the village lane,
And stand before the gate;
—Brought many a distant county through,
To join the final rendezvous.

And when the race is swept away
All to their dusty beds,
Still shall the mellow evening ray
Shine gaily o'er their heads;
While other faces, fresh and new,
Shall occupy the Squire's Pew.

THE LITTLE BIOGRAPHERS.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

It was the custom at Mrs. L.'s school, to spend an hour every evening in hearing some interesting book, which was read aloud by the young people alternately, while the hearers were employed at their needles. Mrs. L. herself usually made one of this happy party; and her questions or remarks on what was read rendered the practice doubly improving and agreeable. Having nearly finished a book which had occupied them some time, Mrs. L. announced that the following week they were to begin an interesting volume of Biography; containing, chiefly, the lives of children like themselves; or giving an account of the early life of persons who had afterwards become distinguished. After Mrs. L. had left them, a few of the elder girls assembling round the fire, began to talk about it: among other things, one of them said she wondered, if anybody were to write *her* life, what sort of a thing it would make; adding that she had a great mind to do it herself. Her companions declared it was a good thought; and several of

them agreed, that as the next day was a half-holiday, they would devote it to writing their own lives.

This scheme was put in execution accordingly; but, as they most of them found it a more difficult undertaking than they had expected, it would probably never have been heard of afterwards, if Mrs. L. had not happened to enter the school-room when they were thus employed; and upon learning what they were about, she requested a sight of the manuscripts. This, with some reluctance, was complied with; when, having glanced at several of them, she desired to keep possession of them for a few days. Nothing more was heard of it, however, until the following Monday evening, when to their great surprise, Mrs. L. produced the promised volume of Biography, with their own manuscripts inserted here and there among the pages.

"Now," said she, "my intention is, that you shall read through this volume just as you see it; your own lives are to be read in turn with these memoirs; take your places, and we will begin." This arrangement occasioned some embarrassment among our young biographers; but they knew remonstrances would be vain. A few specimens of these manuscripts, just as they were written, will be given for the amusement of the reader, together with some extracts from the volume itself. The first life that was read in this collection was that of Lady Jane Grey, whose virtues and accomplish-

ments are so justly celebrated. Her biographer thus speaks of her early acquirements.

"She spoke and wrote her own language with peculiar accuracy, and the French, Italian, Latin, and Greek, were as natural to her as her own. She had also some knowledge of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic; and all this while comparatively but a child. She had a sedateness of temper, a quickness of apprehension, and a solidity of judgment, that enabled her not only to become a mistress of languages, but of sciences also; so that she thought, spoke, and reasoned on subjects of the greatest importance, in a manner that excited general surprise. With these extraordinary endowments she had so much mildness, humility, and modesty, that she assumed no pride in consequence of her acquisitions."

When this life was concluded, the children unanimously petitioned Mrs. L. that none of theirs might be read that evening; but she would not yield to their entreaties, and desired the reader to proceed with the subjoined manuscript, which was as follows:

"Miss M. P. was the daughter of respectable parents, and was born at W——, in Middlesex; a very pleasant town, with two churches and a bridge. When she was nine years old, she went to pay a visit to her cousins at Norwich, which she enjoyed very much, and stayed half-a-year: she went in the mail coach. At twelve years of age she came to Mrs. L.'s school; at which time she

was four feet nine inches high; a light complexion, eyes and hair the same. At school she has not, perhaps, made quite so much proficiency as could be wished. Her disposition———she was rather——her natural temper——as to her disposition——"

Here this narrative broke off abruptly; the writer having declared, when she had proceeded thus far, that "she could not write hers at all."

The following evening they read the interesting life of Frances Maria, of Rochebeaucour; "the daughter of a poor tax-gatherer in Switzerland, who was left an orphan at eleven years old, with a little infant brother to protect and maintain. Having nothing left her by her parents but a little cottage by the side of a wood, and some old furniture, they must have perished for want, but for the industry of Frances Maria. From the age of seven years she had been able to knit a pair of men's stockings in two days. These habits of employment were of great use to her in her poverty; she set herself to spinning, sewing, and knitting alternately; and thus provided for their necessities. A girl, at twelve years old, living alone in a poor cottage, providing entirely for herself, and taking care of an infant brother as if he had been her child, was an affecting sight. Many mothers in the neighbourhood brought their children to see, saying, 'Come and see a girl of twelve years old, who conducts herself like a woman, and passes her nights in providing for her little brother.'

One day, in the midst of a severe winter, when the ground was covered with snow, a she-wolf, followed by five of her young, suddenly entered poor Maria's cottage, and sprung at her little brother; Maria could have saved her own life had she then fled; but, staying to rescue him, the savage animal sprung at her throat, and she was instantly strangled. Thus died Frances Maria, at the age of fifteen."

The manuscript life which followed this was then read.

"In a pleasant village, situated within thirty miles of the metropolis, in the year 1804, Caroline W.—— It was in the year 1804, that Caroline W., in a pleasant village within 30 miles of the metropolis.——Caroline W. was born in the year 1804, in a pleasant village within 30 miles of the metropolis. She was the eldest of five children, whose names were Marianne, Esther, Susan, and George: being the eldest, though some people thought she was indulged on that account, yet, in her opinion, there were many respects in which she was the worst off. Children are so troublesome; and she was often obliged to take care of the youngest. She has been much happier in this respect since she came to school; though there is a great deal to do here: and we have to rise very early these cold mornings. What will happen to her when she leaves school and is grown up, it is impossible at present to determine."

The next life in the volume was that of Francis De Beauchateau; a youth of learning and genius; of whom

it is recorded, for the encouragement of others, "that he was very slow in learning; but that what he wanted in promptitude, he supplied by labour and constant application; and it was thus that he became learned almost in his cradle. In addition to more laborious studies, he displayed a turn for poetry, and his compositions were such, that it was scarcely believed they could be the work of a child. He also excelled in music: yet such was his modesty, that when in company, he would never put himself forward to converse with his elders, though well able to do so: but would rather play with children of his own age: yet if called upon to converse, or to exercise his musical or poetical talents, every one was equally delighted and surprised."

This life was succeeded by the following composition:

"Betsey B—— she was born (if the time we must fix)
In the year—in the year eighteen hundred and six.
Her father's a lawyer, if that must be told;
And as for her mother, she's too apt to scold:
Of daughters and sons they have plenty (no matter),
Though but three of the former and five of the latter.
Of Betsy, the youngest, now what shall we add?
Whose life must be published, the good and the bad.
She's a droll little body, that's fond of a joke;
Whether that to her praise or her blame may be spoke.
Sometimes she writes verses—which all can't attain;
Which if she rehearses, some folks call her vain.
She laughs more than any, but sure that may pass,
She learns less than any, alas! and alas!"

Next followed a sketch of the life of Howard the Philanthropist, whose character is too well known to need any extract here; we therefore pass immediately to that which was placed next to it.

"Biography is a very useful study; and it is in this view that the author of the following annals wishes to introduce to the public the subject of the ensuing lines. M. A. C. left the paternal roof at the early age of three years old, to live with her aunt in Berkshire. After that —nothing particular occurred after that, till she came to reside at Mrs. L——'s school, where she has been two years and a half; and nothing very particular having happened here, she has nothing to add of material consequence. *Finis.*"

The following evening they read the life of Thomas Garratt, who died at the age of thirteen. Accounting for his remarkable attainments, the biographer thus speaks: "By the force of his own genius, by the exclusion of temptations to indolence, by habits of early rising, by a frequent interchange of employment, and by strict adherence to regularity of plan, so much was accomplished." After enumerating a long list of his extraordinary acquirements, it is said, that the relaxations which he chose for himself, were general reading and rational conversation; these were his amusements.

Then came the following manuscript.

"I am an only child, and my mamma was always

very fond of me, only she would send me to school. When I went home last vacation, grandmamma made me a present of a real diamond ring; but Mrs. L—— does not like me to wear it. I hope I shall go and see grandmamma again next Christmas. I am ten years old. I am learning music, and French, and geography, and to net purses; the latter of which I like pretty well: this is all I can think of."

The next evening was occupied by some account of the early piety, and subsequent religious attainments of Madame Guion. The manuscript which succeeded was as follows:—

"M. N. had the happiness to possess very kind and pious parents. She enjoyed so many advantages under their care, that it was surprising she did not profit more by them. There were many faults in her temper, which they endeavoured to subdue; and it is hoped that her own efforts added to their kind admonitions will, in some degree, prove successful. They took great pains, especially, to impress her mind with religion; and though she has been often very thoughtless, and has broken many resolutions, yet I hope—yet it is hoped, the impression will never wear off. Her kind parents sent her to Mrs. L——'s school at the age of eleven; wishing her to attain every kind of knowledge that might be useful to her. Here she had great advantages, which were not improved as they might have been. However, she did take some pleasure in her pursuits;

and sometimes felt a glow of delight to think, that as others of whom she had read, made great proficiency with fewer opportunities, that she also might, by diligence, do the same. It was a great encouragement to her to recollect, that it is industry, rather than genius, that is oftenest crowned with success. M. N. thought she should never forget the kindness of her governess; and that she should always cherish an affectionate remembrance of her school-fellows."

It will readily be believed, that this last little history was heard with a smile of affectionate approbation by Mrs. L——. When they had arrived at the conclusion of the manuscripts, she spoke to the young people to this effect.

"My dear girls, I would gladly have spared you any pain you may have felt from this contrast of your own characters and attainments with those of others, if I had not hoped some good might result from it. You have *felt* the contrast, some of you have, I am sure. I wished you to do so; but not for your discouragement; far otherwise. Happily it is not the *whole* of your lives that these little histories comprehend. It is not, then, too late for any of you to become excellent;—to become as superior to what you now are, as these individuals were to the generality of those around them. It is not yet too late for you to excel in any useful attainment; there is no proud spirit, or evil temper but may yet be subdued; no bad habit but may be conquered; no good

one but may be acquired. That your talents, or even your virtues, should become celebrated, is indeed neither probable nor desirable; but that you may, each in your separate spheres, attain to moral, and even to mental superiority, is not only very desirable, but very probable, I might almost say, *certain*, if you so determine;—if you exert energy of mind, and resolve that it *shall be so;* and if you humbly, but diligently persevere in the right means. Come," said she, returning the papers to their respective writers, "you may now destroy these histories, if you please; determining that they shall no longer be applicable to yourselves; and resolving henceforward so to act that your characters may supply records, at which you need not blush at a future day. It may be useful to you to bear in mind this idea; and to inquire, from time to time, if you are pursuing that course, which would be likely to furnish *good* materials to your biographers."

THE GOOSE.

BY THE REV. ISAAC TAYLOR,
OF ONGAR.

AGAINST all the satirical authors who write,
And let their sarcastic tongues loose ;
I take the defenceless, to give them their right,
I will boldly stand up for a goose.

I will not allow it so foolish a bird,
So destitute truly of sense ;
Because when it screams, you can't make out a word,
Its genius should not be sought thence.

Yes, genius ! for all it has so little brain,
What learning and wit it distils ;
But would you this learning and genius obtain,
Seek it not from its head, but its quills !

So take up its quill, shape it well to a pen,
And write with it learning and wit ;
What, can't you ?—indeed !—can't you do it ?—why then
It is you are the goose, and not it.

HOW IT STRIKES A STRANGER.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

In a remote period of antiquity, when the supernatural and the marvellous obtained a readier credence than now, it was fabled that a stranger of extraordinary appearance was observed pacing the streets of one of the magnificent cities of the east, remarking with an eye of intelligent curiosity every surrounding object. Several individuals gathering around him, questioned him concerning his country and his business; but they presently perceived that he was unacquainted with their language, and he soon discovered himself to be equally ignorant of the most common usages of society. At the same time, the dignity and intelligence of his air and demeanour forbade the idea of his being either a barbarian or a lunatic. When at length he understood by their signs that they wished to be informed whence he came, he pointed with great significance to the sky; upon which the crowd, concluding him to be one of their deities, were proceeding to pay him divine honours: but he no sooner comprehended their design than he

rejected it with horror; and bending his knees and raising his hands towards heaven in the attitude of prayer, gave them to understand that he also was a worshipper of the powers above.

After a time, it is said, that the mysterious stranger accepted the hospitalities of one of the nobles of the city; under whose roof he applied himself with great diligence to the acquirement of the language, in which he made such surprising proficiency, that in a few days he was able to hold intelligent intercourse with those around him. The noble host now resolved to take an early opportunity of satisfying his curiosity respecting the country and quality of his guest; and upon his expressing this desire, the stranger assured him that he would answer his inquiries that evening after sunset. Accordingly, as night approached, he led him forth upon the balconies of the palace, which overlooked the wealthy and populous city. Innumerable lights from its busy streets and splendid palaces were now reflected in the dark bosom of its noble river; where stately vessels, laden with rich merchandise from all parts of the known world, lay anchored in the port. This was a city in which the voice of the harp and of the viol, and the sound of the millstone were continually heard; and craftsmen of all kinds of craft were there; and the light of a candle was seen in every dwelling; and the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride were heard there. The stranger mused awhile upon the glit-

tering scene, and listened to the confused murmur of mingling sounds. Then suddenly raising his eyes to the starry firmament, he fixed them with an expressive gaze on the beautiful evening star which was just sinking behind a dark grove that surrounded one of the principal temples of the city. "Marvel not," said he to his host, "that I am wont to gaze with fond affection on yonder silvery star. That was my home; yes, I was lately an inhabitant of that tranquil planet; from whence a vain curiosity has tempted me to wander. Often had I beheld with wondering admiration, this brilliant world of yours, ever one of the brightest gems of our firmament: and the ardent desire I had long felt to know something of its condition, was at length unexpectedly gratified. I received permission and power from above to traverse the mighty void, and to direct my course to this distant sphere. To that permission, however, one condition was annexed, to which my eagerness for the enterprise induced me hastily to consent; namely, that I must thenceforth remain an inhabitant of this strange earth, and undergo all the vicissitudes to which its natives are subject. Tell me, therefore, I pray you, what is the lot of man; and explain to me more fully than I yet understand, all that I hear and see around me."

"Truly, Sir," replied the astonished noble, "although I am altogether unacquainted with the manners and customs, the products and privileges of your country, yet methinks I cannot but congratulate you on your arrival

in our world; especially since it has been your good fortune to alight on a part of it affording such various sources of enjoyment as this our opulent and luxurious city. And be assured it will be my pride and pleasure to introduce you to all that is most worthy the attention of such a distinguished foreigner."

Our adventurer, accordingly, was presently initiated in those arts of luxury and pleasure which were there well understood. He was introduced, by his obliging host, to their public games and festivals; to their theatrical diversions and convivial assemblies: and in a short time he began to feel some relish for amusements, the meaning of which, at first, he could scarcely comprehend. The next lesson which it became desirable to impart to him, was the necessity of acquiring wealth as the only means of obtaining pleasure,—a fact which was no sooner understood by the stranger, than he gratefully accepted the offer of his friendly host to place him in a situation in which he might amass riches. To this object he began to apply himself with diligence; and was becoming in some measure reconciled to the manners and customs of our planet, strangely as they differed from those of his own, when an incident occurred which gave an entirely new direction to his energies.

It was but a few weeks after his arrival on our earth, when walking in the cool of the day with his friend, in the outskirts of the city, his attention was arrested by

the appearance of a spacious inclosure near which they passed; he inquired the use to which it was appropriated.

"It is," replied the nobleman, "a place of public interment."

"I do not understand you," said the stranger.

"It is the place," repeated his friend, "where we bury our dead."

"Excuse me, Sir," replied his companion, with some embarrassment, "I must trouble you to explain yourself yet further."

The nobleman repeated the information in still plainer terms.

"I am still at a loss to comprehend you perfectly," said the stranger, turning deadly pale. "This must relate to something of which I was not only totally ignorant in my own world, but of which I have, as yet, had no intimation in yours. I pray you, therefore, to satisfy my curiosity; for if I have any clue to your meaning, this, surely, is a matter of more mighty concernment than any to which you have hitherto directed me."

"My good friend," replied the nobleman, "you must be indeed a novice amongst us, if you have yet to learn that we must all, sooner or later, submit to take our place in these dismal abodes; nor will I deny that it is one of the least desirable of the circumstances which appertain to our condition; for which reason it is a matter rarely referred to in polished society, and this accounts for your being hitherto uninformed on the

subject. But truly, Sir, if the inhabitants of the place whence you came are not liable to any similar misfortune, I advise you to betake yourself back again with all speed; for be assured there is no escape here; nor could I guarantee your safety for a single hour."

"Alas," replied the adventurer, "I must submit to the conditions of my enterprise; of which, till now, I little understood the import. But explain to me, I beseech you, something more of the nature and consequences of this wondrous metamorphosis, and tell me at what period it most commonly happens to man."

While he thus spoke, his voice faltered, and his whole frame shook violently; his countenance was pale as death, and a cold dew stood in large drops upon his forehead.

By this time his companion, finding the discourse becoming more serious than was agreeable, declared that he must refer him to the priests for further information; this subject being very much out of his province.

"How!" exclaimed the stranger, "then I cannot have understood you;—do the priests only die?—are you not to die also?"

His friend evading these questions, hastily conducted his importunate companion to one of their magnificent temples, where he gladly consigned him to the instructions of the priesthood.

The emotion which the stranger had betrayed when he received the first idea of death, was yet slight in com-

parison with that which he experienced as soon as he gathered from the discourses of the priests, some notion of immortality; and of the alternative of happiness or misery in a future state. But this agony of mind was exchanged for transport when he learned, that by the performance of certain conditions before death, the state of happiness might be secured; his eagerness to learn the nature of these terms excited the surprise and even the contempt of his sacred teachers. They advised him to remain satisfied for the present with the instructions he had received, and to defer the remainder of the discussion till the morrow.

"How!" exclaimed the novice, "say you not that death may come at any hour!—may it not come this hour?—and what if it should come before I have performed these conditions! Oh! withhold not this excellent knowledge from me a single moment!"

The priests suppressing a smile at his simplicity, then proceeded to explain their Theology to their attentive auditor: but who shall describe the ecstacy of his happiness when he was given to understand, that the required conditions were, generally, of easy and pleasant performance; and that the occasional difficulties or inconveniences which might attend them, would entirely cease with the short term of his earthly existence. "If then I understand you rightly," said he to his instructors, "this event which you call death, and which seems in itself strangely terrible, is most desirable and blissful.

What a favour is this which is granted to me, in being sent to inhabit a planet in which I can die!" The priests again exchanged smiles with each other; but their ridicule was wholly lost upon the enraptured stranger.

When the first transports of his emotion had subsided, he began to reflect with sore uneasiness on the time he had already lost since his arrival.

"Alas, what have I been doing!" exclaimed he. "This gold which I have been collecting, tell me, reverend priests, will it avail me anything when the thirty or forty years are expired, which, you say, I may possibly sojourn in your planet?"

"Nay," replied the priests, "but verily you will find it of excellent use so long as you remain in it."

"A very little of it shall suffice me," replied he; "for consider, how soon this period will be past: what avails it what my condition may be for so short a season: I will betake myself from this hour to the grand concerns of which you have charitably informed me."

Accordingly from that period, continues the legend, the stranger devoted himself to the performance of those conditions, on which, he was told, his future welfare depended; but in so doing, he had an opposition to encounter wholly unexpected, and for which he was even at a loss to account. By thus devoting his chief attention to his chief interests, he excited the surprise, the contempt, and even the enmity of most of the inhabitants of the city; and they rarely men-

tioned him but with a term of reproach, which has been variously rendered in all the modern languages.

Nothing could equal the stranger's surprise at this circumstance; as well as at that of his fellow-citizens appearing, generally, so extremely indifferent as they did to their own interests. That they should have so little prudence and forethought as to provide only for their necessities and pleasures during that short part of their existence which they were to pass in this planet, he could consider only as the effect of disordered intellect; so that he even returned their incivilities to himself, with affectionate expostulation; accompanied by lively emotions of compassion and amazement.

If ever he was tempted for a moment to violate any of the conditions of his future happiness, he bewailed his own madness with agonizing emotions; and to all the invitations he received from others to do anything inconsistent with his real interests, he had but one answer—"Oh," he would say, "I am to die!—I am to die!"

A STORY.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

THERE once was a man who contrived a balloon,
To carry him whither?—Why, up to the moon.
One fine starlight night he set sail for the sky,
And joyfully bade our poor planet good by.
He mounted aloft with incredible speed,
And saw the green earth every moment recede.
"Farewell," he exclaimed, "to thy pride and conceit,
Oppression and injury, fraud and deceit;
Thy flagrant abuses, thy luxury too,
And all thy gay pageants, for ever adieu.
Thy festivals, spectacles, learning and lore;
My share in thy pleasures I gladly restore:
Thy kings and thy nobles, lords, ladies, and squires,
And all the poor world in its dotage admires.
From its factions and parties and politics free,
The statesmen and heroes are nothing to me:
Bonaparte in his cage, on Helena's wild shore,
And all his devices, to me are no more.
Farewell to thy valleys, in verdure arrayed;
Farewell to thy merchandise, traffic, and trade;

Thy wide swelling rivers, that roll to the seas ;
Thy dark waving forests, that sigh to the breeze :
From Britain to China, or Ganges' wide stream,
All fades on my sight like a vanishing dream."

He spoke, and with pleasure soon darted his eyes on
The moon, just appearing above the horizon ;
And sitting upright, with his hand in his pocket,
Shot up the dark sky into space, like a rocket.
But the swiftness with which his light vehicle sped,
Brought on such a giddiness into his head,
That he lay a long time in his boat without knowing
How long he had been, or which way he was going.
At length he aroused from his stupor, when lo !
The beautiful planet was shining below !
Already so near was he come as to see
Its mountains and valleys, as plain as could be.
With feelings no language could well represent,
He quickly prepared his machine for descent.
A fine open plain, much resembling, he said,
Some spots in old England, before him was spread,
Whose smoothness and verdure his presence invited ;
And there, all amazement, our traveller alighted.
What thrillings of rapture, what tears of delight,
Now melted this signally fortunate wight :
And thus he expressed his astonishment soon—
" Dear me, what a wonder to be in the moon ! "

'Twas now early morning, the firmament clear;
For there the sun rises, the same as down here.
He took out his pocket-book, therefore, and wrote
Whatever he saw that was worthy of note.
For instance;—The soil appeared sandy and loose;
The pasture much finer than we can produce.
He picked up a stone, which he wished he could hand
To some learned geologists, down in our land.
A blue little weed next attracted our writer,
Not very unlike to our harebell, but brighter,
And looked, as he said, most decidedly *lunar*:
—He wished he had come on this enterprise sooner.
But still he was far more impatient to trace
What sort of inhabitants lived in the place:—
Perhaps they were dragons, or horrible things,
Like fishes with feathers, or serpents with wings.
Thus deeply engaged in conjectural thought,
His eye by an object was suddenly caught;
To which, on advancing, he found, you must know,
'Twas just such a mile-stone as ours are below;
And he read, all amazed, in plain English, this line—
"Twelve miles to Old Sarum, to Andover nine."
In short, the whole wonder at once to explain,
The man had alighted on Salisbury Plain.

THE PRIVATE STUDY.

BY THE REV. ISAAC TAYLOR,

OF ONGAR.

It happens in many cases, that a very trifle has great influence. Would it be sound philosophy to call that a trifle any longer? The subject of these pages may at first sight appear to be of that unimportant character, but from experience I regard it as having considerable influence, and as being therefore well worthy of attention.

My advice, then, to every young person, is this—secure some place, however small, which you may call your Study. I have known a separation made in the corner of a room, by a few sheets of brown paper hung as curtains from top to bottom, answer the end quite well.

The object of this sacred inclosure is retirement. He that has nowhere to be alone, will scarcely be able to think, will rarely pursue any distinct plan of reading; he must take his chance in the bustle of a family, and be at the mercy of accidents, dunces, and purposed interruptions.

If the place of your abode permit any closet to be thus appropriated, esteem yourself extremely happy.

Surely your situation must be singularly unhappy, if it does not afford you in the corner of your bedroom, a place for a watch-box; or in the remoteness of a garret, some undisturbed spot suitable for the purpose of seclusion. A small space will do, perhaps better than a large room; as it is more snug (and snug is a comfortable word), and as it will be more easily fitted up, and furnished.

When you have secured this accommodation, need it have a name, does it signify what name it has? Yes, all the world through, names have great effect; call it, then, your STUDY. The very calling it so will tend to secure it for the use you put it to. The soldier's uniform helps him to fight, trains him to it; the judge's wig and robes give him gravity. The daily visit to the Study will, in like manner, tend to make you studious.

When you have thus insulated yourself, all is not done which is worth recommending. Bare walls are not very inviting: paper it. Do this yourself; it will interest you the more, by all the labour you bestow upon it. You must be a poor carpenter, if you cannot put up in it a few shelves; and a poor creature indeed, if you don't like them the better for being of your own contrivance, execution, and ornamenting. Come, bring in all the books you have: those you brought from school will

stand very still, and be quite inoffensive, and if not very bad in the binding, will fill up at least. Those gained as prizes, will of course have the best situation, where the light comes full upon them. Those presented to you by your parents or friends, are handsome, and will ornament the shelves to advantage. If you have any which you have purchased yourself, bring them; and if you have not, you will perhaps soon see, or hear of something, which comes within your reach, and which will fill up that unsightly gap, and keep the other volumes from falling about. A Study without books, is an absurdity: but with them, though there is not half you intend to have, yet it already seems something. You enter it with a smile of complacency on your face, and begin already to feel its attractive influence.

To a Study unquestionably belong pens, ink, and paper. How else can you put down anything which might occur to you, or even make a memorandum, of what books you read, or of what money you lay out. A neat writing desk would be a treasure; ask your father just to peep in, and see if it does not want something. A folio to keep your drawings in, if it were only to hide them, would be of use. And if you have one or two, rather better then common, and can procure a frame or two to put them in, they may hang up without offending anybody; for who sees them but yourself: unless indeed your mother, or sisters, should be curious; but you are not afraid they will censure;—nay it is most likely they

will add something: a book, a small glass, or a neat curtain; everything helps.

It will be strange, if, when thus furnished, you do not now and then steal into it, if it be only to see if all is safe, and in order. I will allow you, when there, to do nothing but look at it, first at this side, then at that; but as this will after awhile become wearisome, it will be easy, and quite natural, to take down one of the books, and look into it: if that does not excite an interest, put it up again, and take down another. Your assortment must be very badly chosen, if you do not find something which pleases, which engages your attention, which you put down with regret, when duty calls you away, and to which you return with glee, that you may at least finish that chapter.

The habit of reading it is almost impossible to indulge in the crowd and buzz of a family. Having a place to read in, will go some way towards tempting you to it, if you have not yet felt its pleasures; and towards rendering it easy, if your taste leads you that way. All the importance, therefore, which attaches to reading, pleads in behalf of a Private Study.

Nay, should you wish to talk with yourself awhile, you will now have an excellent opportunity. It is impossible to think steadily while several people are talking in the same room; but when alone it almost comes naturally; at least, if your author puzzles you, you can at your leisure con him over, till you perceive his mean-

ing: if your own mind labours, you can sit and muse, till you examine your sorrow, or your joy, till you shape your vague idea, and pen it down in appropriate words: so that you can look at it on all sides, and judge whether it be just, or fallacious. All the importance which attaches to thinking serves therefore to recommend a Private Study, so convenient a place to think in.

It such processes as these take place in it, the utility of a Private Study,—the beneficial influence it may have upon your mental improvement,—cannot be doubted. The want of opportunity keeps many an energetic character from action; becomes an unanswerable objection to one of weaker tone: half the hindrances to self-improvement will be done away by this single expedient: the opportunity must more or less invite, stimulate, assist.

Indeed, solitude as such is friendly to the mind: just as the silence and repose of night refresh for another day's exertion. Retirement gives repose to the mental faculties; or if it lead to action, it is an activity so different in its nature, as to be in reality a relief. "I hate to be alone," is the outcry not of a strong, but of a feeble mind; of one which has no resources in itself, but is obliged, like a mendicant, to lie idle till some one goes by; to continue empty, till a mite be cast by charity or scorn. Build yourself a Study, and escape from a state so disgraceful. Solitude will soon relieve you, and set your own faculties into honourable motion.

I will not think so meanly of you, as to suppose you will not find this Study an assistance to those pious feelings, an inducement to those devotional exercises, which belong to every rational being who begins to think, who wishes to succeed in thinking, and who knows, that unless the blessing be given, success is not likely: unless the blessing be sought, the enjoyment of it cannot be expected. Should this privacy lead you to converse with authors, it will do you great service: should it assist you to converse with yourself, the benefit will be highly important; but should it facilitate the habit of daily converse with God, the advantage is incalculable, both to your pursuits in this life, and to your better interests in the eternal world.

AN ENIGMA.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

YE philosophers, hark!
My complexion is dark,
Reflection and silence my character mark.

No record on earth
Discovers my birth;
Long reigned I in solitude, silence, and dearth.

I travel away,
In sombre array;
But my turban and sandals are silvery grey.

Majestic my mien,
And my dark form is seen
All sparkling in gems, like an African queen.

One pearl that I wear
Is more brilliant and rare
Than the loveliest gem in a princess's hair.

My stature is tall,
But at seasons I crawl,
Or shrink myself almost to nothing at all.

Invisibly hurled,
I traverse the world,
And o'er every land is my standard unfurled.

I silently roll
Round the icy-bound pole;
And long the wide region endures my control.

From earliest time
I was grave and sublime;
But often am made the accomplice of crime.

My intellect teems
With visions and dreams,
And wild tales of terror, my favourite themes,

Yet sorrow and pain
Oft welcome my reign,
And eagerly watch for my coming again:

For a handmaid of mine,
With aspect benign,
Deals out, at my bidding, a soft anodyne.

My sister down there,
Is transcendantly fair,
But we never once happened to meet anywhere.

Advancing behold
Her banners of gold!
Then I must away, with my story half told.

THE WISE MAN.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

FREDERIC and Philip, with their sisters Julia and Kate, were amusing themselves together one evening while their father and mother were engaged in conversation. The children paid no attention to what passed, till Philip (who was very lively and inquisitive) happened to hear his father say of some person he was speaking of, that he might be truly called, *a wise man.* These last words, which were uttered emphatically, struck his attention.

"A wise man!" said he to his brother and sisters: "who is that, I wonder, that papa can be talking about?" —"Nobody that we know, you may be sure," replied Kate.—"No, but papa knows him, and I should like to know him very much," said Philip; and he began to conjecture what kind of a person this wise man must be. He thought of the seven wise men of Greece; but he did not imagine there were any of that sort in England. As soon as there was a pause in the conversation, he asked his papa what this wise man's name was, and

where he lived. "He lives," replied his father, "not very far off; and his name is Johnson."

"Johnson! O, some relation to Dr. Johnson, no doubt," said Frederic.—"That is more than I know," answered his father; "but if you are so curious to see a wise man, I will promise to take you all to call upon him to-morrow morning."

Philip and the rest thanked their papa for this promise; and very much pleased were they at the thought of it.

The next morning the children talked much of their expected visit; and wondered they did not hear their father give orders for the chaise.

"How many miles off is it, papa?" said Philip.

"Not half a mile," said his father.

PHILIP. Not half a mile! Well now, I had no idea that there was what one could call *a wise man* living anywhere hereabouts.

FREDERIC. No more had I.

JULIA. I think I know where he lives:—don't you remember that old-fashioned looking house, just off the common, with tall narrow windows, and a high wall all around it, where they say a very old gentleman lives all alone?—that is the place, I daresay.

PHILIP. I wonder whether he wears a long beard!

KATE. No, no; most likely nothing but a huge wig.

JULIA. A wig! no such thing! depend upon it he has his own white locks, waving about his temples.

PHILIP. We shall find him up to his elbows in old dusty books, I'll engage.

FREDERIC. Or perhaps with globes and glasses, and all sorts of apparatus.

PHILIP. He will not be very well pleased, I am afraid, to be interrupted in his studies by us.

JULIA. For my part, I shall take care not to speak one word while we are in the room.

KATE. And so shall I.

PHILIP. I hope he will not ask us any questions!

FREDERIC. Oh, as to that, you may depend upon it, he will not notice one of us; perhaps not so much as know we are there.

KATE. I am afraid I shall laugh.

PHILIP. Laugh! if you do though, we shall get turned out, every one of us, depend upon it.

On these remarks their papa made no comment; he only smiled occasionally; and at length bade them make ready to accompany him on his visit to the wise man. When they set off, Julia was much surprised that he passed the turning leading to the common, and kept straight on towards the town. "*Now* I have no idea who in the world it can be," said she. When they entered the town, they looked at most of the principal houses as they passed, expecting to stop every instant.

"*Doctor Somebody*," said Philip, endeavouring to read the name on a brass plate—"this is it, I daresay." But no; his father passed on, and soon turned down a

narrow street, where the dwellings were of a humbler description ; and knocked at the door of a mean-looking house. A plain, middle-aged man opened it, and courteously invited them to enter. "Papa has to call here first, for something," whispered the children to each other. He ushered them into a small parlour, where his wife was sitting at needlework ; while three girls, her daughters, were seated on a form before her, reading their lessons. The room was in perfect order ; and the mother and her children were neatly dressed. The only decorations of the apartment were two or three maps ; and a few portraits of some of the old divines, and other worthies, on the wall.

The young folks listened to the conversation which their father entered into with these persons ; and they quickly perceived (for these children were well taught, and could discriminate) that they conversed sensibly ; and that their father, although much their superior in education, regarded them with respect. After a few minutes thus spent, their papa told the master of the house that he would not detain him any longer from his employment ; but that he had taken the liberty of bringing his children with him, in the hope that he would allow them to look on for a little time, while he was at work : it would be, he said, both amusing and instructive to them, as they had never had an opportunity of seeing that operation before. To this request he most obligingly acceded ; and, with a look of great good nature at

the young folks, immediately conducted them to the uppermost room in the house, in which he carried on his business. It was a light, airy apartment; and there was a pleasant view of the adjacent country from its long low window. The children were much interested in watching the process, and in listening to the intelligent explanation he gave them of his trade; for he was a very ingenious mechanic; and he told them many things which they had never heard before.

When their curiosity was a little satisfied, they began to look around the room, where their attention was attracted to a few shelves, containing his small library. Upon examining the titles of the books, they found that several of them treated of subjects more or less connected with his own line of business. There were, however, a few of a more general nature, and such as the children were surprised to see in the possession of so plain a man. But the greater part of the collection were well-chosen books of divinity; with a Bible which had the appearance of being well read. They now again listened to the stranger's discourse with their father; and were struck with the mild and pleasing expression of his countenance, when he was telling him how happily his hours passed in that solitary chamber.

"I often think, Sir," said he, "that I cannot be sufficiently thankful that my calling is of a nature that allows me so much retirement and opportunity for thinking; so that while I am labouring for the meat that

perishes, I am also able to seek after that which will endure to everlasting life. Indeed, Sir," continued he, "I am a happy man. The cheerful hope of another life is surely enough to make a man unspeakably happy. In addition to this, God is pleased to give me many comforts to render this life pleasant to me. I have a wife like-minded with myself; and when my working hours are over, I want no other recreation than that of going down to her and our dear children, whom it is our delight to train up, as far as we are able, to wisdom and virtue. I have great pleasure in reading to her and to them, such books as we possess; and thus we increase our little stock of knowledge, as opportunity allows. But, Sir, though I mention these things, my happiness, I trust, does not depend upon them; but is fixed upon that good hope which sweetens every comfort, and softens every trial."

The father and his children were pleased with their visit; which, for some time after they took leave, formed the subject of their conversation; until Philip, suddenly perceiving that they were on their return home, exclaimed, "But are not we going to see the wise man?" —"My dear," said his father, "we have but just left him."—"What, was *that* the wise man?" said all the children at once.

FATHER. That was the person of whom you heard me say last night that he was a truly wise man.

PHILIP. But, papa—I thought—

FATHER. Well, what did you think?

PHILIP. Why, although he appears very good, and happy, and industrious, and all that, yet he certainly is not at all the kind of person we expected to see!"

FREDERIC. No, not at all.

FATHER. I cannot help that: and I still think that what I said of him was perfectly correct. What kind of a person did you expect to see?

PHILIP. Why, papa, we thought he would at least be a scholar, you know, with his head stuffed full of Latin and Greek; or a philosopher, or an author, or something of that sort.

FATHER. You mean that you expected to see a learned man, or a clever man, but that was your own fault: I promised you no such thing. Are you not aware, children, that a man may be learned, or clever, or both, without being *wise;* and that a man may be *wise* who is neither the one nor the other?

FREDERIC. Yes, wise in some things.

FATHER. Wise in everything with which *he* has to do.—Can you recollect, Frederic, that definition of wisdom we met with the other day?

FREDERIC. Something of this sort, was it not?—that "*wisdom consists in employing the best means for the attainment of the most important ends.*"

FATHER. Very well. Then I think we have unquestionably seen a wise man this morning. You heard from himself the grand object of this good man's pur-

suit; and this must by every one be allowed to be the most important of all objects. He aims at nothing less than eternal life; and to this end, he appears to employ the best means: such as God himself prescribes. And this wisdom, which is from above, teaches him to conduct himself wisely in all the relations of life. He is wise as a tradesman;—being honest and industrious; and exerting his ingenuity in his calling, as a talent which God has given him; so that he is one of the most ingenious mechanics in the neighbourhood. He is wise as a neighbour—living in peace and charity with all around him. He is wise as the master of a family—being contented with such things as he has; never attempting to vie with his superiors, or aiming to be thought what he is not. He showed himself to be a wise man, by choosing for a partner a wise woman; that is, a pious and prudent woman; and he conducts himself wisely as a husband and a father—guiding his house with discretion, and training his children to tread in his own steps. He eminently displays also one of the invariable characteristics of true wisdom, by his modest and unassuming deportment. But above all, and as the cause of all, this man is *wise*, in making it his chief concern to be a Christian; not merely by profession, but in earnest. His religion, you see, is of the true sort. It not only gives him a hope of being happy hereafter, but it makes him happy *now*. It shines in his face, and reigns in his dwelling. In that solitary room where

many would think it a punishment to pass an hour, he enjoys, daily, the high honour and happiness of holding communion with his Maker; while the noisy world below are disquieting themselves in vain, with every passing vanity. And in his daily walk and conversation he has this testimony,—that he pleases God.

Now, children, have I not performed my promise?——tell me, if you have not seen, according to the strictest sense of the words, A WISE MAN?

THE CLEVER FOOL.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

NOT very long after the father and his children had paid their visit to the wise man, the effects of a gentleman lately deceased in that neighbourhood were advertised for sale by auction. As it was well known that his house contained many curiosities, persons from miles round flocked to attend the sale; and, amongst the rest, this gentleman and his children; for he was so good a father, that he suffered no opportunity to escape that might afford instruction or rational amusement to his family.

"Children," said he to them, as they were driving to the place—"you remember that some time ago I took you to see a wise man; you were surprised by that visit; perhaps you will be still more so when I tell you, that we are going this morning to the late residence of a man, who, according to all that appeared of his character, might with equal propriety have been called *a clever fool.*"

PHILIP. A clever fool?

JULIA. It seems a contradiction.

FREDERIC. Papa will explain it, I dare say.

KATE. A clever fool!—how droll!

FATHER. As this poor gentleman was a stranger to you, and as our opinions can now do him neither good nor harm, I do not scruple, with a view of its being useful to ourselves, to relate to you what appeared unfavourable in his character. But let us, at the same time, indulge a charitable hope, that we may, after all, be mistaken in our judgment. Indeed, I could wish, as much as possible, to keep him, as an individual, out of sight. I only mean to explain to you, that a person living and acting, as it is commonly reported he did, can claim no higher appellation than that of *a clever fool.*

CHILDREN. Well, papa, now tell us how it was.

FATHER. Nay, stay till we arrive at his house, and have looked about us, and then you shall judge for yourselves.

Upon their arrival at the destined spot, they were charmed with the beauty of the situation, and the pleasant aspect of the residence. The house and grounds were rather compact and elegant, than extensive or magnificent: but there was a symmetry and beauty of design which at once pleased the eye, and conveyed an idea of the good taste of the possessor. And as the general view was striking, the detail, when examined, excited still greater admiration. Our party, at first, amused themselves with walking through the

park and gardens, which exhibited, at every turn, some ingenious contrivance for pleasure or utility. The gardens displayed a variety of the most beautiful flowers, in the greatest perfection. The greenhouses were, of themselves, thought worth going many miles to see, they contained so rare a collection of exotics, and other curious plants, disposed in the most exact order; while fruits in and out of season yielded their tempting fragrance in rich profusion. Stately swans adorned the river that wound through the park; while shady alcoves, rosy bowers, classic temples, baths, and fountains, at every turn surprised the admiring visitor. The recesses of a shady grove conducted to a cool and beautiful grotto, which was enriched with some of the most rare and curious specimens in mineralogy. Lastly, they visited a small botanical garden, which afforded them much instruction as well as amusement; for the late possessor was a man of science, and took particular pains with this well-arranged collection.

The children were delighted; and not less surprised when they were assured that of these various embellishments and contrivances he was himself the designer and inventor: and that it was his own taste and ingenuity that was displayed in every part.

Upon entering the mansion, the effect was not less striking. The apartments were disposed and furnished with great taste and elegance; and continually exhibited some novel invention for promoting ease or pleasure, or

for avoiding inconvenience. But, what was the most interesting, were the valuable collections in the various departments of art and science with which this house was embellished. A capital collection of old pictures, by the best masters, occupied the long gallery. The library was extensive, and contained a well-arranged assemblage of the works of the most celebrated authors of every age, and in every language.

They were next shown a cabinet, containing a valuable assortment of ancient coins and medals; after which they visited the laboratory; for it appeared that the deceased possessed a thorough knowledge of chemistry, and had himself made some ingenious discoveries in that interesting science. Another room was devoted to mechanics; and exhibited models of many of the most useful and ingenious machines of modern invention, some of them displaying improvements of his own. Last of all, ascending to the highest story, they reached the observatory, which was furnished with its appropriate apparatus, and contained the largest telescope these children had ever seen. The gentleman, it was said, frequently passed whole nights in this place; astronomy was his favourite study:—for all these things were not collected by him (as is frequently the case in the houses of the rich) as mere appendages to wealth. The curiosities of science, art, and literature, are commonly enough to be seen in the possession of persons of trifling and vulgar minds, wholly incapable of deriving

any other gratification from them than as articles of show, and who value them merely as they do the other expensive ornaments of their dwellings. But, in this instance, they were possessed by a man of taste and science; who derived genuine pleasure from the pursuits in which he was engaged; and who was therefore, so far, happy, useful, and respectable. When the party descended to the lower part of the house, they found it filled with company, and the great hall exhibited a scene of noise, bustle, and confusion. The auctioneer was, at that moment, expatiating on the value of an article before him, which some were cautiously examining; others were marking their catalogues; each was intent on his own interests, and nothing was less thought of than he to whom all had so lately belonged.

"Let us leave this noisy place, papa," said Julia—"it makes me melancholy."—They soon made their way through the crowd; and leaving the mansion, their father led them through a fine plantation to the outskirts of the park, where they soon discovered a little ivy-clad steeple, embowered in dark chestnut trees, surrounded by a few lowly graves, and adorned with one or two stately monuments. "Here," said the father, pointing to one of these—"lie the remains of this accomplished person."

"Now then, papa," said Philip—"pray tell us, though I partly guess, why you called such a clever man—a fool." "Because," replied his father—"of his whole

existence, which he knew would be endless, he apparently provided for no more than the exceedingly small proportion of sixty-eight years.

"It is true that to make these sixty-eight years pass pleasantly, he spared no pains; and we will allow, that he so far succeeded, as to enjoy, during that time, more rational pleasure than most men who live only for this world. But, granting this, is it not still the lowest degree of folly for a man to devote all the energies of his mind to securing the comfort and entertainment of so short a period, and to make no provision for an eternal existence? There he lies! all that he ever appeared to care for he has lost for ever. These curious collections which he made with so much pains and cost —all those fruits of his patient and laborious studies, which we have been admiring, will, in a few hours, be disposed of and dispersed: the cheerful mansion will be empty and deserted: other inhabitants will occupy it: in a few years his name will be no more remembered! so that the only thing that was of any real consequence to him, is that which, it is greatly to be feared, he totally neglected.

"But the extremity of his folly was this:—that this change which he has undergone, this loss of all that he valued, was what he was well aware, must, somewhere about this time, befal him. He knew, as well as all other men, that he must die. He knew, too, that the great Creator, whose works he spent his life in investi-

gating and admiring, had, by an express revelation, informed him, in common with others, of the only way of securing everlasting life and happiness. Of these things he could not be ignorant: nor did I ever understand that he professed to doubt them: yet, strange to say, that divine volume stood unopened on his shelves. It is said this unhappy man rarely read the Bible!—that he, who could spend whole nights in gazing on the heavens, bent not his knee to the Former of them all; that while so plenteously partaking the bounties of His providence, he never (unless with the utmost formality) acknowledged his obligation; or appeared to feel his dependence. Even of late, when he knew he must be drawing towards the close of life, he appeared to engage, with as much avidity as ever, in his favourite pursuits: though he loved conversation, and delighted to discourse on other subjects, yet he was never known to talk about the life to come, upon which he was so soon to enter. Thus he deliberately chose to enjoy these few poor years, and to neglect his concerns for immortality. Now, if this clever man had purposely set fire to his beautiful house, and had calmly seen all his valuable collections consumed by the flames, everybody would have exclaimed—"What a fool!"—As it was, he was extolled and applauded by most men although guilty of incomparably greater madness than this.

"Children, endeavour to conceive (though it is im-

possible you should fully comprehend it) the tremendous folly of neglecting a book which God has sent us to read! It is only because it is so very common for men to disregard their Bibles, that we are not more struck with the strange absurdity of it. This gentleman was particularly admired for the universality of his talents; and it was always spoken to his praise, that, while so much engaged in scientific pursuits, he attended equally to the elegances and refinements of life; he was as cheerful a companion, and as finished a gentleman, as he was a sound philosopher. But, alas! how very far, it is to be feared, he was from being *universally* sagacious! — how very partial and limited even was his cleverness! He not only knew that in a few years he must die, but, in some ways, he deliberately prepared for the event. He made his will: he gave particular directions as to what should take place after his decease: he even caused this vault to be built, left directions for his funeral, and wrote an inscription for his monument. So that, you see, he left nothing undone but that one thing, which, alone, was of real consequence to him. This poor clever fool had no forethought, — made no provision for his soul!

"I have been told, that the last thing that occupied his attention was an improved method of raising pine-apples. By a great deal of thought and ingenuity, he succeeded in raising them some weeks earlier, and of a finer sort, than any that were grown in the neighbour-

hood. Yes, children — here was a man of nearly seventy, really interested about *pine-apples*, while the great business of his eternal welfare was still unattended to! A party of friends was invited to dine with him, in order to partake of this rich dessert; but, on the eve of this intended entertainment, it was said to him—'This night thy soul shall be required of thee.' He was found the next morning dead in his bed; and now, whose are those things that he possessed?"

JULIA. Oh, papa!

FATHER. Now, children, let us leave this melancholy spot: remembering that whether or not our fears as to this person are well founded, we are but too well assured that the world abounds with men and women, who, if not as clever, are quite as foolish as we have supposed him to have been. Let it be *our* chief concern that we may not be of the number. But never, never, till that day when this sepulchre shall be torn open by the voice of the archangel, will any human mind be fully able to comprehend the dreadful difference between a *plain wise man*, and a *clever fool.*

THE SONG OF THE TEA-KETTLE.

BY MRS. GILBERT (ANN TAYLOR).

SINCE first began my ominous song
Slowly have passed the ages long;
There I hung, or there I stood,
Giving what sigh my nature could;
Content, till man the trick should catch,
To purr to the lift of the cottage latch.
Ready and bright, with warmth elated,
Many a husband's step I've waited,
Gladding the heart of a faithful wife
With the cheerful din of my humble life,
Or soothing with quiet monotonous stir,
Sad thoughts, when he had forsaken her!

Oft woman my homely virtues told,
But oh! there was wealth, like Indian gold,
Hid in my dark uncomely breast,
Richer than gems of the miser's chest!
Fraught with the weal of kingdoms vast,
I sighed as the simpleton Man went past;

Vainly I gave significant proof,
By thrusting high my prisoning roof;
My lips uncouth, their witness bore,
But, inarticulate, could no more!

Slow was the world my worth to glean,
My visible secret long unseen!
Surly, apart, the nations dwelt,
Nor yet the magical impulse felt;
Nor deemed that charity, science, art,
All that doth honour or wealth impart,
Spellbound, till Mind should set them free,
Slumbered, and sung in their sleep,—in me!
At length the day in its glory rose,
And off on its spell,—the *Engine* goes!

On whom first fell the amazing dream?
Watt woke to fetter the giant Steam,
His fury to crush to mortal rule,
And wield leviathan, as his tool!
The monster, breathing disaster wild,
Is tamed and checked by a tutored child;
Pond'rous and blind, of rudest force,
A pin or a whisper guide its course;
Around its sinews of iron, play
The viewless bonds of a mental sway,
And triumphs the soul in the mighty dower,
To knowledge, the plighted boon—is *Power!*

Hark! 'tis the din of a thousand wheels
At play with the fences of England's fields;
From its bed upraised, 'tis the flood that pours
To fill little cisterns at cottage doors;
'Tis the many fingered, intricate, bright machine,
With its flowery film of lace, I ween!
And see where it rushes, with silvery wreath,
The span of yon archèd cove beneath;
Stupendous, vital, fiery, bright,
Trailing its length in a country's sight!
Riven are the rocks! the hills give way,
The dim valley rises to unfelt day;
And man, fitly crowned, with brow sublime,
Conqueror of distance reigns, and time.

Lone was the shore where the hero mused,
His soul through the unknown leagues transfused;
His perilous bark on the ocean strayed,
And moon after moon, since its anchor weighed,
On the solitude strange and drear, did shine
The untracked ways of that restless brine;
Till at length, his shattered sail was furled,
Mid the golden sands of a western world!
Still centuries passed with their measured tread,
While winged by the winds the nations sped;
And still did the moon, as she watched that deep,
Her triple task o'er the voyagers keep;
And sore farewells, as they hove from land,
Spake of absence long on a distant strand!

She starts,—wild winds at her bosom rage,
She laughs in her speed at the war they wage;
In queenly pomp on the surf she treads,
Scarce waking the sea-things from their beds;
Fleet as the lightning tracks the cloud,
She glances on, in her glory proud;
A few bright suns, and at rest she lies,
Glittering to transatlantic skies!

Simpleton man! ye tribes of yore,
Open awhile Death's dusty door;
Rise for a glimpse of victories won,
Busily see the peoples run;
The midnight watch they now forego,
Praying dim stars their fates to show,
And yield such powers, as bring to birth
Secrets of fortune hid in earth:
Mountain and precipice melt away,
The mind's high sorcery who shall stay,
Who, to her necromantic cry
"Hither come up, but pass not by?"
No! she has felt her strength, her force,
And springs abroad to a limitless course!
Simpleton man! why who would have thought
To this,—the song of a Tea-kettle brought!

A PERSON OF CONSEQUENCE.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

HAVING announced in the title what sort of company may be expected, our readers, we hope, will prepare themselves with their best bows and most courteous behaviour. Perhaps they may imagine they already hear the rattling of wheels, the trampling of horses, and then the thundering rap that bespeaks high company. Whether they will be disappointed or otherwise, will depend on their respective tastes and habits, when we beg leave to introduce little *Betsey Bond*, daughter of John Bond, the journeyman carpenter. The truth is, that until her present introduction to our readers, she, like Cowper's lace-maker,

> "Had ne'er been heard of half a mile from home;"

so that it behoves us to give our reasons for denominating this poor child, who is but just turned of twelve years old, a *person of consequence.*

Now if our readers could but take a walk into a neighbouring village, and enter the cottage where Betsey lives; if they could only know how much she had been

missed, and how often she had been wanted, only during her present absence from home, the thing would explain itself.

Those persons are of most *consequence* in the world, who would be most missed if they were out of it. By *missed*, it is not merely meant that the places and persons that now know them would then know them no more; for this meaning would apply to the most insignificant or the most troublesome people that breathe; but by *missed* we understand that their place in society, whether it be high or low, large or small, is not likely to be so well filled up. Now, according to this explanation, how many persons of consequence there are, who are, really, of *no consequence at all!*

Betsey's parents are but poor people; they have a large family, and her mother has an ill state of health. In order to make a little addition to her husband's earnings, she exhibits in her cottage window a few articles for sale:—such as a scanty assortment of tea, tobacco, and snuff; papers of pins, shoestrings, and gingerbread; twopenny loaves, brass thimbles, and suckers; earthenware, button-moulds, and red-herrings. Now with this concern, bad health, and *always* a baby in arms, "what she should do," as she says, "if it was not for her Betsey, she can't tell, nor nobody else. There are five little boys, of no use in the world, that have to be looked to; and there's the baby! and there's the shop! so that, if it wasn't for Betsey!"———why Betsey is up betimes

in the morning, long before her mother is stirring; lights the fire, sweeps the house; washes and dresses her little brothers, gives them their breakfasts, and gets them ready to go off to school; and all this by the time her mother comes down stairs: and what a comfort it is to her to see all this done for her, so poorly as she is of a morning! Then nobody knows but they that see it what a good hand Betsey is for minding the shop. Though she is always busy at her needle, or washing, or ironing, or something of the kind, yet the moment the bell rings, there she is behind the counter, with a smiling face, and a civil word for everybody: yes, and just as civil to a child that only comes for a farthing sucker as to a customer who wants two ounces of green tea. Who is it that mends John Bond's shirts so neatly; and that runs his stockings at the heel, so that they last as long again? Oh, why it is his daughter Betsey. And who is it that waits on her mother when she is ill, like an old nurse; or rather *unlike* an old nurse?—this, too, is Betsey. So that we may fairly appeal to our readers, whether, according to the strictest sense of the word, little Betsey Bond is not a person of *consequence*.

To render this more apparent, let us for a moment bring forward another visitor. But do let us allow poor Betsey to make her escape first; for she would colour down to her fingers' ends to be detained before such grand company. Go then, Betsey; run home to your mother as fast as you can; for she wants you sadly, and

is wondering "what in the world she shall do if you don't come home presently."

And now, although the young lady we are about to introduce is well dressed, well behaved, and very respectable in her connexions; we must (adhering to the definition that has been given of the term) announce her as a person of *no* consequence. It will be proper however to remark, that nothing could have surprised this young person much more than to have heard herself so described: because it was the earliest, and is still the uppermost idea in her mind, that she *is* somebody of *consequence*. So that her astonishment at such a designation could only be exceeded by that of little Betsey Bond if she had overheard our introduction of her. It was a fundamental fault in the education of this little lady that the first feelings of self-importance, instead of being checked, were cherished by the ill-directed fondness of her parents. Therefore we ought to pity her mistake. And now, they themselves suffer most severely from the effects of it. There is nothing that we can discover in the person, manners, or education of this girl to distinguish her, particularly, from thousands and tens of thousands of her age and class in society. In all these respects she may pass very well; but how is it that with nothing more to boast than is common to others, she feels of so much *consequence?*

But we have yet to substantiate our charge: although indeed, in the view of the more discerning reader, this

is already done. To say that a person is *consequential* is much the same thing as saying they are not of much consequence. But, more particularly, we have called this young lady of no *consequence*, because all she ever appears to aim at is to serve and to please *herself*. She has been tolerably attentive to the various branches of her education; she has some activity and cleverness in common things: she has a good taste in dress, and in other similar affairs: you may see her for hours at her instrument or at her drawing-book, or at her needle, and might think her very industrious: but alas, alas! all this is to please *herself*. Her station in life does not indeed require that she should do such things exactly as Betsey Bond does; yet there are many little services she might render to her father and mother, to her brothers, and friends, and neighbours, which would not only endear her to them, but would render her a person of *consequence* amongst them: for activity and good nature are of great consequence in every house; but she never thinks of anything of that kind. Her thoughts, her time, her cleverness, her industry, all, all, are made to serve one person only, and that person is *herself*. If you see her ever so busily at work, you may be sure that she is making something that she thinks will look well on *herself*. If you meet her running up stairs, or down stairs, or going on an errand, you may depend upon it it is to get something for *herself*. And as she thinks so much of herself, all this is no wonder,

because any one of so much importance must needs require as much waiting on. But surely people may be pronounced to be of no *consequence* when no other human being is the better for them. If little Betsey Bond were to die, her poor mother would almost break her heart: her brothers and sisters would miss her every day of their lives; there is not a neighbour all round but would lament her: indeed there is not one person in twenty but could be better spared. But as for this young lady, although if she were to die her parents, from the force of natural affection, would doubtless feel afflicted, yet even they would never be reminded of her by any little affectionate attentions which they would then miss. Her brothers and her young friends might be sorry for *her;* but they would lose nothing and miss nothing themselves. And alas! there are no poor neighbours of hers who would be any the worse off if this young lady were never to be heard of more. Now then, we again appeal to our readers (begging them to be guided by their good sense, and not to be biassed by external appearances or common modes of judging) and inquire, which of these girls is the person of *consequence?*

Self-importance is a feeling very common to young people; ridiculous as it is in everybody, and especially so in them. Even where it has not been fostered by the weak partiality of parents, and by the flattery of foolish friends, it is but too apt to insinuate itself into the heart of a child; in which, as Solomon says, "folly

is bound up." There are, indeed, many circumstances connected with youth which tend to cherish it. The pains that are bestowed upon their education—the kind attentions which benevolent people frequently pay to the young—the notice they attract merely because they are young, may easily be misinterpreted by juvenile vanity, as though there was something particular in *them*, in distinction from other young people, to excite all this, and to render so much pains and cost desirable. Now although this proceeds chiefly from ignorance and inexperience, yet it is always a disagreeable fault; and those young persons who are possessed of natural good sense will soon detect and discard it. Those, on the contrary, who are weak and vain, and who have not the advantage of a judicious education, will most probably be so unfortunate as to remain in their mistake all their lives. Some such individuals are to be found in every neighbourhood: self-important, consequential, officious persons; who are smiled at by the wise, and laughed at by the witty.

This is no uncommon fault in these busy times. But the officiousness of such persons generally gives more trouble than their services compensate. It is those who act quietly, who make little noise and no pretence, who do most good—perhaps all the real good that is done in the world. Now, as it is a far pleasanter thing to correct this fault for ourselves than to wait till other people do it for us, it would be very well for every one

who may be conscious of such an infirmity, to recollect, as before hinted, that it is a feeling which persons of *real* consequence never indulge.

Let young persons, then, put some such questions as these to themselves. Do I think myself a person of consequence? if so, on what grounds?—who is the better for me? if I were away, who would miss my services? would my parents lose many dutiful and affectionate attentions? would my brothers and sisters lose a kind, and accommodating, and self-denying companion? would my friends or poor neighbours be any the worse off for my removal? would one and another have to say, "Ah! if she were but here, she would have done this or that for us?" But if conscience assures us that in no such ways as these we should be missed or regretted, then, whatever our station, whatever our external advantages, whatever our opinion of ourselves may hitherto have been, we may be assured that we have not, at present, any just grounds for self-complacency: and if we are discontented with this conclusion, let us go and learn of *Betsey Bond* how to make ourselves *persons of consequence.*

REMONSTRANCE TO TIME.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

STAY, hoary Sage! one moment deign
To hear thy duteous child complain;
  Nor scorn her pensive lay:
But while a suppliant at thy side,
Thy fearful scythe in pity hide,
And that old hour-glass throw aside;
  They fright my song away.

Regardless of thy hoary age,
Thou indefatigable Sage,
  Incessant is thy toil:
Thou canst, with an unnatural joy,
Thine own ingenious works destroy;
For 'tis thy favourite employ
  To perfect and to spoil.

And Beauty's temple, Wisdom's brow,
Old Time! it well befits thee now,
With pains to decorate:
Scatter thy silver honours there,
But, O good father Time, forbear!
I ask thee not to deck *my* hair;
It ill becomes thy state.

Go, bind thine ivy o'er the oak,
And spread thy rich embroidered cloak
Around his trunk the while;
Or deck with moss the abbey wall,
And paint grotesque the Gothic hall,
And sculpture, with thy chisel small,
The monumental pile:

But oh! from such majestic height,
Wilt thou, descending, stoop thy flight
To seek my lowly door?
What glory canst thou reap from me,
By all neglected, but by thee?—
Consider thine own dignity,
And proudly pass me o'er.

—But false the hope! and vain the prayer!
Thy hand was never known to spare;
Nor will thy speed delay:

Yet hear thy trembling victim's sigh;
If e'er thy microscopic eye
Perchance one youthful grace espy,
May *that* become thy prey!

Thy wrinkles, and thy locks of snow
(The choicest gifts thy hands bestow)
At those I do not start:
But come not thou, a treacherous guest,
To steal those feelings, dearest, best—
That glow that warms the youthful breast:—
With *these* I cannot part.

Oh! should such joys supplanted be
By frigid worldly policy;
And cold distrust ensue;
Adieu, ye dear poetic powers,
And Fancy's fair enchanted bowers,
And all the sweets that once were ours;
A long, a sad adieu!

But is it in thy power to chill
Affection's dear transporting thrill,
And Friendship's fervid glow?
Ah! if thy cruel aim be this,
I shudder at thy marble kiss,
And clinging to my parting bliss,
Call bitter tears to flow.

But, Sire, command these fears away :
Tell me, affection's milder ray
  Shall gild my wintry sky :—
That hope my fainting spirit cheers,
Dispels my sighs, and dries my tears :
Angelic now thy form appears,
  And mercy in thine eye.

COMPLAINT OF THE DYING YEAR.

BY JANE TAYLOR.

RECLINING on a couch of fallen leaves, wrapped in a fleecy mantle, with withered limbs, hoarse voice, and snowy beard, behold a venerable man. His pulses beat feebly; his breath becomes shorter; he exhibits every mark of approaching dissolution. This is Old *Eighteen Hundred and Seventeen;* and as our readers must all remember him a young man, as rosy and blithesome as themselves, they will perhaps feel interested in hearing some of his dying expressions, together with a few particulars of his past life. His existence is still likely to be prolonged a few weeks by the presence of his daughter *December*, the last and sole survivor of his twelve fair children; and it is thought the father and daughter will expire together. The following are some of the expressions which have been taken down, just as they fell from his dying lips: any want of order or accuracy will, therefore, be excused.

"I am," said he, "the son of old father *Time*, and the last of a numerous progeny; for he has had no less than

five thousand eight hundred and seventeen of us; but it has ever been his fate to see one child expire before another was born. It is the opinion of some that his own constitution is beginning to break up, and that when he has given birth to a hundred or two more of us, his family being complete, he himself will be no more.

"Alas! how have I been deceived! Like other youngsters I was sanguine and credulous in early life, and no wonder, for in my youthful days I received nothing but flattery and adulation, with the fairest promises of respect and good treatment. I heard that my poor brother and predecessor had been very ill used: This they confessed, while they declared their intentions to behave better to me. I have been told, that on the morning of my birth, nothing was heard but the language of joy and congratulation. It was a season of general festivity; every face beamed with pleasure; all was hope and expectation. In some places the event was announced by the ringing of bells, in others it was recognised by solemn thanksgivings and hymns of praise. My name was sounded in every social circle, and my appearance was acknowledged in many a retired chamber. It was not, indeed, on those outward and noisy demonstrations of joy that my highest hopes were founded, but rather upon the many private assurances, and even solemn vows and promises I received from one and another of being well treated, duly appreciated, and properly employed. It was at this time that I heard so

much of their ill conduct towards my late brother, how his property had been squandered and his gifts undervalued, while, as the best and only compensation they could make for his behaviour, I was to receive double attention and unabating respect. I could not but felicitate myself upon having made my appearance at so favourable a juncture, when so many seemed sensible of my value, and agreed, as with one consent, to do me justice. It was thus, in good humour with myself and my dependants, that I commenced my sanguine career, and moving onward in my swift but regular course, began to distribute of my substance as I passed. Though it is true that I gave but little at a time, yet my donations were so perpetual that all who stood ready to receive as I dealt them out, might have become rich. But very early in my career I began to experience considerable disappointment, from observing that, although I was still spoken of in terms of general respect, yet that my individual gifts were despised or misemployed. Many of my precious moments have I seen thrown away with great contempt as of no value, although they were of the very same quality as those weeks and months of which they still continued to acknowledge the importance."

Here the Old Year called for his account books, and turned over the pages with a sorrowful eye. He has kept, it appears, an accurate register of the moments, minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months which he has issued, and subjoined in some places notices of the use

to which they have been applied. These particulars it would be tedious to detail; perhaps the recollection of our readers may furnish them as well. But we must notice one circumstance: upon turning to a certain page in his accounts, the old man was much affected, and the tears streamed down his furrowed cheek. This was no other than the register of the forty-eight Sundays which he has already issued, and which, of all the wealth he had to dispose of, has been, it appears, the most scandalously wasted. "These," said he, "were my most precious gifts. I had but fifty-two of them: alas! how lightly have they been esteemed." Here, upon referring back to certain old memorandums, he found a long list of vows and resolutions which had a particular reference to these fifty-two Sundays. This, with a mingled emotion of grief and anger, he tore into a hundred pieces, and threw them on the embers by which he was endeavouring to warm his shivering limbs.

"And yet I feel," said he, "more pity than indignation towards these unhappy offenders; they were far greater enemies to themselves than to me. But there are a few outrageous ones by whom I have been defrauded of so much of my substance, that it is difficult to think of them with patience,—that notorious thief, *Procrastination*, for instance, of whom everybody has heard, and who is well known to have wronged my venerable father of so much of his property. There are also three noted pickpockets, *Sleep*, *Sloth*, and *Pleasure*, from whom

I have suffered much, besides a certain busybody, called *Dress*, who, under the pretence of making the most of me, and taking great care of my gifts, steals away more of my property than any two of them.

"As for me, all must acknowledge that I have performed my part towards friends and foes. I have fulfilled my utmost promise, and been more bountiful than many of my predecessors. My twelve fair children have, each in turn, aided my exertions, and their various tastes and dispositions have all conduced to the general good. Mild *February*, who sprinkled the naked boughs with delicate buds, and brought her wonted offering of early flowers, was not of more essential service than that rude, blustering boy, *March*, who, though violent in his temper, was well-intentioned and useful. *April*, a gentle, tender-hearted girl, wept his loss, yet cheered me with many a smile. *June* came crowned with roses, and sparkling in sunbeams, and laid up a store of costly ornaments for her luxuriant successors. But I cannot stay to enumerate the graces and good qualities of all my children. You, my poor *December*, dark in your complexion, and cold in your temper, greatly resemble my first born, *January*, with this difference, that he was most prone to anticipation, and you to reflection.

"If there should be any who, upon hearing my dying lamentation, may feel regret that they have not treated me more kindly, I would beg leave to hint, that it is still possible to make some compensation for their past

conduct, by rendering me, during my few remaining days, as much service as may yet be in their power: let them testify the sincerity of their sorrow by an immediate alteration in their behaviour. It would give me particular pleasure to see my only surviving child treated with respect. Let no one slight her offerings—she has a considerable part of my property still to dispose of, which, if well employed, will turn to good account. Not to mention the rest, there are four precious Sundays yet in her gift. It would cheer my last moments to know that these had been better prized than the past.

"It is very likely, at least after my decease, that many may reflect upon themselves for their misconduct towards me. To such I would leave it as my dying injunction, not to waste time in unavailing regret; all their wishes and repentance will not recall me to life. I shall never, never return! I would rather earnestly recommend to their regard my youthful successor, whose appearance is shortly expected. I cannot hope to survive long enough to introduce him; but I would fain hope that he will meet with a favourable reception, and that in addition to the flattering honours which greeted my birth, and the fair promises which deceived my hopes, more diligent exertion, more persevering effort may be employed. Let it be remembered, that one honest endeavour is worth ten fair promises."

Having thus spoken, the Old Year fell back on his

couch nearly exhausted, and trembling so violently as to shake the last shower of golden leaves from his canopy. Let us all hasten to testify our gratitude for his services, and repentance for our abuse of them, by improving the few remaining days of his existence, and by remembering the solemn promises we made him in his youth. This is the best preparation we can make for his expected successor.

[In the year 1816, Jane Taylor spent some weeks at Hastings with my Father, who was then entirely unknown to fame. After an interval of nearly fifty years—his literary career completed,—and bowed down by age, he revisited Hastings in company with his surviving sister, Mrs. Gilbert. On taking leave of him—never, as it proved, to see him again, she put into his hands the following lines, which may fittingly close these volumes.—EDITOR.]

THE trees were young, and so were they,
And life's uncertain scope
In pleasant haze before them lay,
A land of love and hope.

Of love! oh yes, tho' many a year
In changeful tint has sped,
Not one has checked the smile, the tear,
That Love, sweet Love, has shed!

Nor shall it check! Eternity
But keeps it more secure!
Earth—all its charms a dream shall be,
Yet Love shall still endure!

And Hope,—of earthly hope to tell,
How strange the view became!
For *one* it closed,—*untimely well*,
Still wearing wreaths of Fame.

She sleeps, where many a tearful eye
The honoured dust bedews,
And e'en a stranger passing by
The fragrant name reviews.

The other! now the hoary crown
Of thought and age sustains;
A life of exquisite renown,
Of labour, blessing, pains!

Love all its forms has worn to him,
The crowning bliss of toil!
Of Hope, if once in prospect dim,
How large the noble spoil.

People; yes, Peoples! west and east!
His honoured name revere!
And when the days of Time have ceased,
To millions 'twill be dear!

'Tis true that Hope no longer then
The spirit life shall feed;
But Love beyond what here we ken
Shall then be Love indeed!

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